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[ALONE IN THE WORLD.]

SNOWDROP'S FORTUNES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"From her Own Lips," &c. &c.

CHAPTER. I.

KEZIAH.

"SUFFER the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

The words roll through the church in the Rev. Martin Bewdley's most sonorous tones; and Keziah Clark, sitting in the front row of the gallery amongst the Sunday-school children, wonders in a dull, bemused sort of way who it is that calls children so, and what sort of a place heaven is like. She hears a great deal about it at Sunday-school; but she cannot read yet, and everybody says she is too wicked and stupid ever to go there, wherever it is.

Keziah's life is not a happy one. Her limbs are bruised and chafed under the decent frock which is provided for her to go to church and school in; and her stomach is very empty,

poor child, for Mrs. Higgs, who undertakes parish children, and always has two in her household, is a cruel, hard woman: clean to excess on the outside of the cup and the platter; godly, inasmuch as she attends church and never misses any of her duties; and smooth-spoken to a degree, when any of those she calls her "beters" are about.

Keziah Clark, who has lately been consigned to her keeping in consequence of the death of her former protectress, is lectured and admonished by everyone for saying she will not love Mrs. Higgs, and openly declaring that the good woman starves her and beats her and generally ill-uses her. It is true, for all Mrs. Higgs's protestations to the contrary, and only Keziah herself can tell what her life in the tidy cottage is, or how many nights she passes in sleepless misery trying to devise some project for bettering her condition.

Her brain is not very fertile in expedients as yet, for she is only seven years old, poor little mite, and her workhouse training has not done much towards developing her ideas. But the sermon sets her thinking. She under-

stands this much, at any rate: "Suffer little children to come unto Me." Who can it be? she wonders. It is not Mr. Bewdley, for whenever he speaks to her it is to ask her why she is not a better girl, or whether she knows where naughty children go to, or some comfortable question of that sort.

It isn't anyone she knows, or has ever seen, she is sure of that. But it must be someone, or the parson would not talk about Him like that, and tell them all to seek Him while they are young. What if she tried to seek Him? What if she ran away from Mrs. Higgs and asked someone more good-natured than she was to tell her the way to go? The new notion made her feel quite wide awake—and church was a sad purgatory generally, for she could not keep awake, and the headle did hit so hard with his stick when her head drooped—and for the rest of the service she sat bolt upright, with wide-open eyes, and a busy brain, lost in a dream of what she would do when she found this Person who cared for little girls, and would perhaps give her plenty to eat, and not shut her in dark, cold places where there were rats and all sorts of indefinite horrors.

Her dream lasted till church was over, and she was rudely seized by Mrs. Higgs at the door and ordered to hasten home and perform certain duties while her protectress stayed to have a gossip with a friend or two, and drop a curtsey to the parson as he came out. She went as she was bidden, but her wits were wool-gathering with the new and strange idea that Mr. Bewdley's words had placed there; and she performed her task so badly that Mrs. Higgs deprived her of what poor dinner she was about to give her, and thrust her, all bruised from a fresh beating, into the dreaded coal place, where the rats ran about, and made her flesh creep by coming close to her and sniffing round her as if they were anxious for a meal.

There was not much of her, poor child; she was horribly thin and worn. The parish does not feed its children any too well anywhere, but the workhouse food she had enjoyed in her babyhood was plenty compared with the morsels Mrs. Higgs flung her, as if she had been a dog. She often wished she was a dog when she saw how some dogs were fed; and many a time she had stolen pieces put out for the big dog at the rectory.

His kennel was close to the fence, and there was a hole just by it, and he was not always there; and when hunger made Keziah fearless, she would put her hand through and take whatever she could reach. Perhaps if Mr. Bewdley had ever happened to see her, he would not have been so ready to believe all that Mrs. Higgs told him of the child's bad behaviour. He was a splendid preacher, and a good man in his way, but he was rather above his people. He disliked unpleasant details, and unless a thing was brought directly under his eyes he failed to see it sometimes. A thin, pale child was no novelty in "Wilder's End," as the village was called. The neighbourhood was very poor, and the labourer's pay exceedingly small. It was as much as the people could do to live at all, and many of the children were pale and thin where they ought to have been fat and rosy.

The farmers did well enough, and they paid their people as much as farmers anywhere else did. But the labourers mostly had large families, and found it hard enough to live.

The sum allowed by the parish for the keep of two children was as small as it could be possibly made, but Mrs. Higgs made it pay her by the simple process of starving the little ones, and pocketing the money. She was some distance from the workhouse, and it was not always convenient to visit her—the officials found it a great deal easier to send the money sometimes—and so her treatment of charges had not as yet been called in question.

It must have been something very flagrant indeed to have attracted any attention, for the authorities held that these miserable little beings must not be pampered. In most cases they were only waifs and strays who had really no business in the world at all, and who were only a burden and a nuisance to the ratepayers. Keziah Clark was especially so. She had been cast on their hands from her birth. No one knew anything about her origin; she had been cradled in the arms of a workhouse nurse, and rocked in a pauper cradle as long as that luxury was allowed her, and she had come to the age of seven years without ever having known the meaning of a caress or a kind word.

She was small for her age—under-feeding does not conduce to rapid growth—but she was well-formed, and her face, when not disfigured by dirt and tears, was rather striking. She would be a beauty when she grew up, in all probability, though the face was more eager and sharp now than pretty. Her eyes were magnificent, large, dark and liquid, and fringed with lashes that many a London beauty would have given a great deal to possess; they swept the chin, small cheek with a soft, dark fringe, and gave an air of refinement to the features seldom seen amongst the children of the lower classes.

She sobbed and cried herself into a state of stupor—poor child!—as she lay on the grimy

coals in the musty shed. Her tidy frock had been taken off with no gentle hand, and she had only a ragged petticoat and some tattered under-garments to keep her from the cold air. Her head ached from the blow that had accompanied Mrs. Higgs's angry words—that worthy lady knew where to hit so that there should be no visible marks; and she was sore all over from yesterday's beating, and Friday's, and all the precedings days.

She had not been actually ill-used, though she had often gone very hungry, in the house of the woman whose death had caused her to be sent to her present home. And she had been somewhat better off before the other child had been taken away; when there were two of them to corroborate each other's tales, Mrs. Higgs had to be a little more careful. Presently she was roused by being dragged out of the coal place and being set to wash the dishes—a feat beyond her powers, for she was faint for want of food.

A dry crust and more beating was her reward for her obstinacy, as Mrs. Higgs called it, and, driven to desperation, she turned, and fastened her teeth in the cruel hand that was chastising her. Enraged beyond measure, the woman beat her till she herself was breathless and exhausted, and then flinging her back into the coal shed, declared she should stay there till she came to her senses. Shivering there, the child heard her look the cottage door, and, shrieking, implored her not to leave her there all night. But Mrs. Higgs was roused now, her hand was bleeding and very sore, and she shouted back that, for all she cared, the rats might eat Keziah, and fastened bolts and bars, leaving her to her fate.

How long she lay there sobbing and moaning she did not know; but after a lifetime of dread and horror on account of the rats, as it seemed to her, she heard a different kind of noise from their scuttering feet, and sat up to listen. She was not afraid of anything human except Mrs. Higgs. No one could do any worse thing to her than she was in the habit of doing. Even if it was someone coming to kill her it wouldn't matter much! It was a man's footstep, and came quite close, and presently a voice asked:

"Is there anyone there?"

She knew the voice; it was that of a man who lived close by—the ne'er-do-well of the parish, always in trouble.

"Why, it's that poor little mite!" he said to himself. "Shut up there, I declare!"

He approached cautiously, for Mrs. Higgs was a friend of his wife's, and often joined that good lady in reviling him for his idle habits, and he had a wholesome fear of her tongue. He could reach the roof of the shed, and see through where one of the boards was loose. He could hardly discern the form of the child, as she crouched down in the farthest-most corner; but he could hear her hurried breathing, and the sobs that were breaking out again now that she was roused.

"Keziah!" he said, "is that you?"

"Yes," she answered, cheered even in this utter misery by the sound of a human voice.

"Is it Dan?"

"Yes, it's Dan. What are you doing there?"

"She beat me and shut me up," the child replied, in a low tone, fearful that even through the walls and locked doors Mrs. Higgs might hear her.

"The fiend!" exclaimed Dan, with much fervour.

"And I'm so hungry and so cold!" the child went on. "Do give me a bit of bread, Dan."

Dan had to consider before he answered. It was an unseemly hour of the night for him to be abroad, and he knew right well what sort of reception awaited him at home if his wife heard him go in.

"I'll see, dearie; I'll see," he said, wondering if he could get at anything eatable, or indeed if there was anything eatable, in the house.

"And let me out, Dan. I can get out if

you pull that board away. I can't get it down."

"Will she let you in?" asked Dan, wondering whether he dared knock Mrs. Higgs up and plead Keziah's cause.

"I don't know; I shan't try," the little one answered. "I'm going, Dan!"

"Going, child! Where?" asked the man in amazement.

"I don't know! I'm going to try and find Him!"

"Who's Him?" Dan inquired, wondering whether Mrs. Higgs had beaten the little one's wits quite away, and driven her mad.

"Him that said children were to go to Him. The parson said it in church this morning. He couldn't beat me worse than she does; and maybe He'd let me rest sometimes and have some more to eat. I don't think He lives anywhere hereabouts. I'm going right away from Wilder's End, and then I am going to ask some one to tell me. I don't believe they know here; and Mrs. Higgs tells everyone I never tell the truth, and I daren't speak to anyone."

Dan cleared his throat, for somehow he felt husky, and looked at the little girl, who had come close to the hole and was looking at him in the gloom. He had not understood her at first, for he did not affect church much, and had not read his Bible since he was a boy; but by degrees it dawned upon him that she had taken the sweet Gospel message literally, and wanted to set out in search of the Good Shepherd, whom she believed, in her childish innocence, to be a real personage, and the natural protector of all helpless children.

CHAPTER II.

IN SEARCH OF THE UNKNOWN.

How far that little candle throws its beams!
So shines a good deed in a naughty world.

SHAKESPEARE.

"Let me out, Dan," again pleaded the child. "She said the rats might eat me if they would, and there are such a lot here. I can hear them all the while."

"I can let you out, child, that's easy enough," said Dan, good-naturedly, "but what will you do then? It's not after twelve yet—at least not much after," he added, with an uneasy consciousness that it must be a good deal after one. "Will you wait till the old cat in there gets up? Don't run away, there's a good girl. She'll only make it worse for you when she catches you—they'll take you back to the house most likely."

"I don't mind so I get out. Oh! dear Dan, do pull that board away; I'm so frightened."

Dan was tender hearted, though his own ragged brood often felt the weight of his fists; he could not bear to see anything suffer like this miserable child was suffering now, and he pulled away the board till the space was big enough for Keziah to get through.

"There!" he said, when he had dragged the shivering child out and set her on the ground, "you're out, and a precious shindy there'll be in the morning. Sit down there in the corner out of the wind. Don't stir, like a good girl, and I'll get you something to eat."

It seemed news almost too good to be true to the famished Keziah, and she almost forgot how cold she was in the glorious prospect. It was somewhat of a puzzle to Dan how he was to do it. His wife kept good guard over everything in the house, and slept, he declared, with one eye open. She was sure to be watching, and in a bad temper, and he dared not propose to take the little one in, even though she was homeless, for the night.

The Fates favoured him this time. He crept into his house, for there were no locked doors there. They had not much to lose, and there were no thieves at Wilder's End. Mrs. Higgs had only locked her door out of spite when she thrust Keziah into the coal-shed. Dan bade her not be frightened, he would be back directly; but he need have had no fear—all her fear had vanished now that she was out of the

dreaded neighbourhood of the rats. The long shadows of the houses had no terror for her, and the rustling of the tree tops in the darkness only sang a lullaby that would soon send her to sleep if she were not so cold and hungry.

Her benefactor made his appearance again in a very short time with something in his hand—he had made a successful raid on his wife's store of provisions, and had brought out some stiff, cold porridge and a hunch of bread. A ragged old shawl, too, had come under his notice in the brief minute he was feeling his way about, and he had confiscated that also.

"There!" he said, putting it round the child's shoulders; "it will help to keep the cold off, maybe; and eat that, and when daylight comes she'll let you in; and if anyone asks you aught about this rag here, say I gave it to you, as bold as brass. I'd take you in if I could, but there'd be such a row if I did, the place wouldn't hold me for ever so long. It will soon be morning. Keep up your heart, little lass, and don't think about running away; there's nowhere you can go to where they won't catch you."

"He wouldn't let them, if I knew where to find Him," Keziah said; and Dan answered her, softly:

"You don't know—you don't understand. I don't know as I do rightly. 'Tain't a real man, it's in the Bible, you know, and all that. You keep where you are—it will be better for you."

And with another touch on the old shawl, and a stroke on the head that was a caress from him, Dan deemed it wise to depart and creep into his own bed before his tired wife awoke to the knowledge of his absence. He slept late, and was awakened by a noise of women talking down below. It was Mrs. Higgs and his own better-half noisily discussing the disappearance of Keziah, who was no where to be found. There had been a loose board in the coal place, and the artful little wretch had crept through it and run away; no one could tell where she had gone or when, and Mrs. Higgs's wrath was loud and long.

"And I dare not say a word about it, at least, to-day," she said. "I am almost sure there'll be someone from the house here before night with another child."

"The Lord help it!" said Dan, above, to himself, as he heard the intelligence.

So poor little Keziah had done as she said, and run away to seek for the Good Man who invited little children to come to Him. What would be the end of it? Would she be found dead in some ditch, or would she be caught and given over to the tender mercies of Mrs. Higgs again? The former fate would be almost the more merciful of the two.

No tidings came of the runaway, and the afternoon brought the official from the workhouse with another victim. He asked for Keziah Clark, as in duty bound; he was also bound to see her, and report on her condition. But he waived that ceremony when he was told in a most tender fashion that the little dear was in the woods somewhere with her playmates. Mrs. Higgs could fetch her of course, but—

Nothing of the sort was required, and the messenger departed, leaving the quarter's payment for the missing child, and the other unhappy little one who had come to a woful experience of life in entering Mrs. Higgs's house. Everybody who heard of Keziah's disappearance said she would soon come back—a child of that age could not go far by herself; and Mrs. Higgs promised that when she did appear she should be made to remember it; but the day wore itself out and night came, and there was no sign of the child, and the good lady began to be really alarmed.

No sign of her the next day nor the next. They had yet to find how firm of purpose and brave a little child goaded to extremity by cruelty can be. Then the search began in earnest. Dan kept his own counsel. What good could he do by telling what the little one had said to him?

"Maybe she's found what she wanted," he

said to himself, as he thought of the little starved face and the eager eyes that always looked so hungry. "Maybe He's took pity on her, and let her go to Him as she wanted to. I suppose there is something in it—the parson says there is."

Dan was not sure of anything except the one fact that he had been instrumental in helping the child to get away. If she were dead, would her death lie at his door? He thought not; surely Mrs. Higgs was more to blame than he was, for he had fed and comforted the forlorn victim of her cruelty, and the remembrance comforted him not a little in the days of suspense and dismay that followed the loss of the workhouse waif.

Everybody noticed that something had come over Dan Childers. He was more quiet and steady after the child ran away than he had been for long before. His wife's sharpest words failed to excite him to oaths or blows, and she began to think that he was what the Scotch call "fey," and that she should see him brought home to her maimed or dead. But no such catastrophe happened. No tidings came of Keziah, and nothing happened to Dan. Mrs. Higgs was shown up in her true light very soon, for the other child ran away, too, and told her tale to a farmer, who carried her straight before the magistrates with the marks of blows on her back and shoulders, and Mrs. Higgs lost her occupation, and very narrowly escaped being sent to prison into the bargain.

Everybody looked upon the child as dead, and Mr. Bewdley preached quite a touching sermon, intended as a sort of warning to all naughty children, about what befell little girls and boys who were disobedient and ran away from their natural protectors; but this was before the truth of Mrs. Higgs's behaviour came out, and when the rev. gentleman did not quite know the true facts of the case.

Poor little Keziah very nearly found what she was seeking so earnestly. The unseen Reaper who takes the flowers as an offering to his Master, had very nearly gathered in his harvest and folded her in his shielding arms before succour came to her. The first night she spent close to Wilder's End. She was afraid after she had gone half a mile or so—everything looked so strange in the darkness, but with the daylight her courage came back, and she went on. She begged a bit of bread of a child like herself during the day, and scrambled into a cart full of dry weeds and fell asleep. When she awoke it was dark, and she was being moved with the load. A cross-grained man was in charge of it, who pulled her roughly out when he saw her moving there, and flung her down in the road, bidding her be off, or he would beat her.

She needed no second bidding; this man was certainly not the person she was looking for, and she ran with all her might across a field to escape from him. She was in a fever by this time, poor child, though she did not know what ailed her. She seemed to have unnatural strength, and she had lost her hunger. Night came on and the rain began to fall, and then she was chilled to the bone. Bewildered and almost bereft of reason with fright and fatigue, she still pressed on till she came to a road.

It stretched away before her in the darkness, shining and wet, and seemed to rise up towards her; she felt herself strike the cold, wet earth, and knew nothing more.

Rule Britannia! Britannia rules the waves;
Britons never, never, never shall be slaves.

The words came trolling out on the dismal night air with any profusion in the matter of "Never," and an indefinite prolongation of the last note that was more effective than musical. The singer did not know any more of the song, it appeared, for he began the chorus again.

"Rule, Britannia! Britannia rules the waves. I wish she'd rule the rain, too; I've got a river running down the small of my back, this minute; there's a hole on the back of my sou' wester, that's certain. Halloa! Dash my buttons! what's that? I was nearly down.

Woa, mare! Back, Venus! By all the powers, it's a child!"

The "Venus" who was adjured to "back" was a purblind old mare, bony of aspect and as ugly as one of her species could well be, but in good case and up to her work, for all that. The vocalist had only stopped his song and the conveyance Venus was drawing just in time; another minute and the wheels would have gone over Keziah.

"What's the matter, Job?" asked a female voice from the interior of the vehicle, and a door was hastily opened somewhere in the back of it. "We haven't broke down, have we?"

"Law, no, mother! you are always fancying we are breaking down. Show a light, will you?"

A light was shown, and with it a middle-aged woman with a weather-beaten face, and garments of the most nondescript description, though all clean and whole; in fact, the good lady had got out of bed to see what the matter was, and her night gear was hardly the costume for a muddy road and a steady downpour of rain.

The caravan was the dwelling-place of "Professor Eglantine," otherwise Job Potts, and his wife, who figured in their bills when they issued any as Madame Vanderwitz. Both these elegant names were the products of Job's own brain, and very proud he was of them. They were show folk by profession, and could do a little of almost everything that their nomadic race attempted a few years back. They were conjurers, and no mean acrobatic performers—at least the husband was; madame had "run to flesh," as her husband phrased it, of late years, and was not so useful as she had been in that line.

Even "Venus" was a genius in her way—she was a trained animal, and well up in many tricks; and the dog who was trudging along by the side of his master, all wet, hungry, and muddy, was able to tell fortunes, pick out the prettiest girl and the one who would be married next, point out cards, and add up numbers, in fact do everything that a showman's dog ought to do, even to wheedling the money out of the spectator's pockets, in a fashion not to be surpassed.

Horse, dog and man, all stood still over the prostrate form of Keziah, and Mrs. Potts looked out from the door expectant.

"What is it?" she asked again.

"A child," replied Potts from the road.

"A child lying there?"

"Yes."

"Dead?"

"I don't know."

"Law bless me! Bring her in and let us see," Mrs. Potts said, eagerly, and forthwith proceeded to poke up a tiny fire and put on a little kittle and do everything that a motherly woman would do for such a miserable atom of humanity.

A child always touched Mrs. Potts's heart; she had only had one, and it lay under the turf in a far-away churchyard in Devonshire. About the age of this one it had been when she lost it, and she took the wet, dragged little form into her arms with a rain of motherly tears as she thought of her own dead darling.

CHAPTER III.

A NEW LIFE.

Only add
Deeds to thy knowledge answerable, add faith,
Add virtue, patience, temperance, add love
By name to come called charity—the soul
Of all the rest; then thou wilt not be loath
To leave this paradise, but shalt possess
A paradise within thee—happier far.

MILTON.

"Wake up Jeremiah, Job; it's time for him to take his turn outside," Mrs. Potts said, as her husband gave her the dripping and insensible child. "He can look after Venus, and

you can help me with her if she isn't dead, poor little soul!"

"I don't think she's dead," Mr. Potts replied. "I felt her move, I know. Here, Jeremiah, get up, there's a good lad, and take your spell. I'm most drowned, I am."

A pleasant invitation with which to wake a man out of his sleep: but Jeremiah, sleeping in a something that looked like an elongated washing tray in the farthest corner of the travelling habitation, seemed to regard it as nothing out of the way, and proceeded to tumble up and stretch himself with many a grunt and yawn. A tall, loose-jointed young fellow, with a ugly, good-natured face, was Jeremiah—a forlorn creature, without a friend in the world except the show people, who had picked him up and given him a meal and some work when he was almost starving, and taken him with them from one town to another by way of setting him going in the world.

He had made himself so handy that the few hours' service had grown into a thing of years, and he had cast in his lot with theirs, proving himself a faithful retainer and a most useful servant. He slept in the corner of the caravan in wet weather like this. In fine summer time he as often as not took his rest under a hedge, or amongst the ferns and bracken on the nearest common. There was a good deal of the gipsy in his composition, and he liked the stars over his head better than a roof.

He looked at the prostrate child with wondering pity as Mrs. Potts stripped off the sodden clothes and chafed the thin limbs.

"Workus," he said, shortly, pointing to the coarse rags. "They'll be taking you up for stealing on 'em, master."

"I'll put up with all they'll do to me," Mr. Potts said. "They'll have to answer to someone for that before they meddle with me," and he pointed to the bruises and weals on the scarcely covered bones, with an air of disgust and a muttered ejaculation that the Rev. Martin Bewdley would have delivered a homily an hour long upon.

The tears stood in his wife's eyes as she looked at the wretched little object in her lap.

"What shall we do with her, Job?" she said. "She isn't dead; she's beginning to move."

"Put her to bed, first thing," her husband said. "She looks as if she had been out, the Lord knows how long. Give her a drop of something hot, and tuck her up."

The child was staring at him wildly now, and he began to talk vehemently.

"Do let me out, Dan! dear Dan, do! The rats will eat me—she said they might!" and then she sobbed and clung to her new protectress in an agony of fancied terror that made the good woman hug her tight and cry over her with all her large heart.

"Poor little soul!" she said, "what can they have been doing to her. Did you see which way she came, Job?"

"Which way!" retorted Joe, with some scorn. "I never see anything till I stumbled over her in the road. Another step and Venus would have trodden on her; but she and Pluto were quicker sighted than me, and stopped. See! Why, the rain was coming down in a sheet, and me going right against it. We couldn't see anything but mud."

"Then she must have been lying right in the road."

"Of course she was; she's had bad times of it somewhere. It isn't anywhere we have been or we should have heard something about a child being lost. We shall hear fast enough if anyone wants to get her back again."

Poor Keziah, enveloped in a white garment belonging to Mrs. Potts and enfolded in that lady's motherly arms, looked even more shrunken and small than when she wore her own wet and mud-stained clothes. She was not conscious of anything yet, probably, but a sense of rest and warmth; she was fever-stricken and famishing, and strange recollections of the past mingled with the fancies of the present.

Job Potts was as handy as a woman, and

while his wife was occupied with the child he had made some broth hot in a little pannikin and was ready to feed her now with some bread soaked in it. Lying back in his wife's fat arms, she received one or two mouthfuls in silence—her contentment too great for words, and she said softly to herself:

"It is Him, I know it is."

"You don't know me little lass, do you?" Job asked, and the child, to his astonishment, said promptly, "Yes, I do."

He certainly did not know her, but he thought she might be some child who had been to his show, and who, perhaps, recollected him from seeing him perform.

"And who am I, then?" he asked.

"The Good Shepherd," replied Keziah, unhesitatingly.

"The what?" asked Mr. Potts, while his wife stared at the child in wondering awe.

She caught the meaning that he did not, and thought the forlorn little waif was delirious. So she was, but only partially so. Fact and fancy were mixed in her exhausted brain; she had found what she wanted, and was at rest.

"The Good Shepherd. The parson told about you," the child repeated. "He said little children were to come to Him, and when I was beaten and put in the coal-hole with the rats, Dan helped me out, and I tried to find you, and—"

She was dropping asleep now, and Mrs. Potts's tears were falling on her baby head.

"Poor desolate lamb!" she said, at length. "Who is Dan, I wonder? Do you know what she meant, Job?"

"Ay," said the man, in a quiet voice; "she's heard the parson preach, and she thinks it's all real. What do you say, wife, shall we make it as near reality as we can for her?"

He touched the wan face of the sleeping child with an almost awe-stricken touch. It seemed to bring the truth of the Bible straight home to him somehow—that this tiny creature should have interpreted a passage so literally.

"My mother used to read her Bible regularly," he said, "and took us to church. I haven't been much of a church goer since she died, poor soul, but I remember all that about the little children. This mite must have had hard times of it somewhere to start off like that to seek something she had only heard of—the Good Shepherd! I never heard anything like it in my life."

And Professor Eglantine drew the back of his hand across his eyes in a very natural and unprofessor-like fashion indeed.

"Do you mean to keep her, Job?" Mrs. Potts asked. "May we?"

"That's just what I meant, wife; and there'll be no one to hinder us, I'm thinking. It seems to me as if she was sent to us. If we hadn't been going by, she'd have died on the road; we have brought her back to life, and we've a right to keep her."

"We shan't be took up for child stealing, shall we?" asked the wife, anxiously.

"Not we," replied her husband, reassuringly.

"The parish isn't eager to have brats thrown back on its hands when it once gets rid of them. I don't suppose anyone will ask us where she came from—it's no one's business, any way. She'll be glad enough to stay. She may have to live hard a bit, sometimes; but she won't be beat."

That she would not. Job Potts and his wife were too tender-hearted to hurt anything; neither Venus nor Pluto ever had an unnecessary stripe bestowed upon them, and even Jeremiah, who was as stupid sometimes as it was possible for a human being to be, could only tell of a rough word or two, and on very solemn occasions indeed, when he had offended past the endurance of his long suffering master, of a box on the ear which was a caress compared with the thumps and kicks which had often been his portion in the earlier part of his existence.

There was no thought of the trouble and responsibility they would entail upon themselves in succouring this stray lamb that had come to them for shelter, no grudge of the food

she would eat—food that was often scarce and hard to find; she had dropped from the clouds, as it were, into their arms, and they would keep her. Her artless words had gone straight to their hearts—and then she was just about the age of the darling they had lost and mourned so long.

"She isn't bigger than many a child of three, or four at the outside," Mrs. Potts said, as she laid her in a comfortable bed; "but she might be an old woman, to look at her poor pinched face, that she might!"

"I should say she was about seven or eight," Job said. "She'll do for the business capably, when she's filled out a bit."

By "the business" he meant anything that might turn up that a child could do, or anything that might present itself to his mind that would prove what he called "a draw." Children are always attractive, and he looked upon Keziah's straight and comely face as so much stock-in-trade, that might be made available as the time went on. They were getting rather low in the way of attractions. His tricks were becoming somewhat antiquated; and, as before observed, Mrs. Potts was getting too stout to be quite fit for her business.

They talked till daylight over their plans for the child; and when Keziah woke out of her first heavy sleep of weariness and exhaustion, it was evident to them both that there would be no question of making use of her in any way for some time to come. Her over-excited brain had given way, and she was raving in a delirium that told only too plainly in its disjointed utterances and terrified implorings for mercy at the hands of some one, before they had nearly run over her in the road.

They nursed her through it. She had a good constitution, and childhood soon surmounts illness when there is kind care to help nature.

It was small wonder that she had disappeared, and that the careless search made for her resulted in nothing. Wilder's End was in the far north, on the very borders of Scotland, and before Mrs. Higgin's *protégée* was well enough to tell with any coherence who she was and where she came from, the caravan and its inmates had made their way to the south, and were drawing very near London.

Job Potts often declared that they had been luckier since they had picked up the child than they had been for long before; and, indeed, it seemed as if they had fallen upon more fortunate times.

Mrs. Potts was much taken up with her charge. Her husband was by no means so expert as he had been in his younger days; Jeremiah was stupider than ever, if that were possible; and yet, with all these drawbacks, fortune favoured them, and people came to see their show. At fairs their booth was always full, and Mrs. Potts vowed that the child had brought a blessing with her.

They learned all about her in the days of her convalescence. They had but a very vague understanding where Wilder's End was. Keziah was bright and intelligent enough, and told them all she knew; it was not much, poor child—only her name, and the fact that she came from the workhouse; and she clung to the motherly Mrs. Potts with a newly-discovered sense of what a mother's love was like, and implored her not to send her back, but to love her and keep her and let her be her own little girl. The good soul consoled her and kissed her—a new experience to Keziah—and promised that she should never go back to the people who had been so cruel to her.

"The parish won't want you back, my dear," she said; "and if they do we shall have something to say to them, maybe. We'll keep you never fear."

And so it came about that at a certain fair, not a great way from London, which Professor Eglantine was wont to frequent, there appeared a new feature in his entertainment—a little girl of wonderful beauty, and possessing more power far exceeding that of any child at present in the travelling fraternity. There was a great deal of conjecture as to who she was, and

where she came from; but the professor and his wife were very reticent on the subject, and allowed it to be supposed that they had imported the new attraction from foreign parts, at a great cost.

She had a name, for she was announced in the bills that Jeremiah sometimes distributed when they wanted to be particularly aristocratic, and introduced to the admiring crowd in front of the caravan as—"Little Snowdrop."

CHAPTER IV.

PROSPEROUS TIMES.

Trust no future, howe'er pleasant.
Let the dead past bury its dead.

LONGFELLOW.

"LITTLE SNOWDROP! Well I'm blessed!"

The fun of the fair was at its height, and the people were pouring into the different booths in willing crowds, and Professor Eglantine and his wonderful little girl were drawing as many as could possibly get into the small booth every time they announced a performance.

The fair was a very full and noisy one, albeit the glories of pleasure fairs were very much on the wane, and theatres of a stationary kind were rapidly displacing the temples of the drama that went about on wheels. There were music halls everywhere for sight-seeing folks who liked performances of magic and second sight, and more than one offer had already been made for the services of the child known as "Little Snowdrop."

Job Potts and his wife clung to their nomadic life; they could not bear to give up the delights of travelling with their house about them like a snail with its shell, and so far they had had no need to complain. Their good fortune had been unprecedented. Round them was going on "all the fun of the fair," and close to them was a booth devoted to pugilism and sparring, an exhibition which Mr. Potts regarded with much contempt, on account of its vulgarity, for he did not care for Snowdrop's young ears to be assailed by the unseemly conversation of its patrons.

He was a rough-speaking man himself—most of his race are—but he never indulged in anything of the kind in the presence of his charge. It became a matter of remark that the professor was growing more particular, and much railery about turning "pious" was bestowed upon him, of which he took no heed. His companions were envious of his success, doubtless, and he had to keep a watchful eye on Snowdrop, or she might have been carried off.

The proprietor of the sparring booth was a new comer into the showman world—he had been a great deal better off at one time, and had had a public-house of fair standing and considerable profit in a remote part of the kingdom—but drinking, betting, and all the small vices that these large ones bring in their train had done their work, and he was at a very low ebb indeed now; he had passed through almost every stage of poverty before he had contrived to set up this last venture. He had gone in with nearly every one else on the ground to see the new attraction—and had come out again very considerably astonished.

He had watched the child through all her performances, which were really remarkable, like a man in a dream. She was undoubtedly clever; she never missed anything, or made the slightest mistake; and the spectators applauded her to the echo, as much for her beauty and grace as for her skill. No one would have known her now for the starved little spectre tyrannised over by Mrs. Higgs—she had filled out, and was plump and well-formed, though still rather small for her age.

Her cheeks were rosy and healthy-looking, and no paint was needed to enhance her beauty; her hair was silky and long, and it hung on her shoulders in curls which gave Mrs. Potts very little trouble—she had only to aid the natural wave in a slight degree. The child had learned to dance, and flung her little

limbs about in a graceful solo during the interval between her other performances.

Mr. Jones of the sparring booth, otherwise "Signor Delevanti," seemed as if he could not take his eyes from her face, and went out of the show with the exclamation at the head of this chapter on his lips. The little girl had been round after the fashion of her branch of the profession, to collect what coppers she could from amongst the audience, who were generally ready enough to drop a penny into her tambourine for the sake of looking more closely into her pretty face, and satisfying themselves that she was really a child and not a disguised dwarf.

Mr. Jones took her hand and detained her for a minute in conversation while he looked at her.

"So you're 'Little Snowdrop'?" he said.

"Yes, sir."

"But that's not all your name?"

"I have no other, sir."

"And where were you before you came here?"

"You must ask father, please sir," the child replied, that being the answer she was bidden to give to any questions that became too pressing.

"Father, eh?" said Mr. Jones, with an uncomfortable grin.

"And you love father very much, I'll be bound."

"Indeed I do," the little girl answered, with a readiness and earnestness that was certainly not feigned, and which astonished the worthy Mr. Jones very much, his experience of show children being that they generally hated and feared those who exhibited them, whether parents or not, most cordially.

"And mother, too, I suppose," he added, staring at Snowdrop in a fashion which frightened her, she did not know why.

"Indeed I do," she said, repeating her former words, "I love them both more than I can tell; let me go, please sir, father is beckoning me."

Job Potts was making signs to Snowdrop; he did not know the man who was detaining her, but he was always suspicious of any one who was more than usually inquisitive about her.

"It's only me, neighbour," Mr. Jones, called out, "next door you know."

He jerked his hand in the direction of his own booth, and Professor Eglantine nodded, but called the child away nevertheless, and the rival showman went to his own dominions. There was a break in the performances just then, and he called his wife, a dirty shrewish looking woman, who was busy about the back of the booth, and ordered her to fetch a pot of beer.

"And be quick about it," he added, in a surly tone, "I've seen summat as has made me thirsty."

"What have you seen?" asked his wife.

"Never you mind, you fetch my beer, and then maybe I'll tell you, not before."

The beer was brought, and he slaked his thirst with a draught that more than half emptied the measure, and then he condescended to explain.

"I've seen the child."

His wife looked at him in wonder, she thought, not that he had been drinking, for that was an every day fact, but that he was worse than usual.

"What child?" she asked.

"The child."

"Oh that little imp next door that every one is talking about?" Mrs. Jones said, contemptuously. "I wish she was choked, I do—she draws everybody away. We were half empty this afternoon while all the folks were gaping at her—I should like to smother her."

"Who do you think she is?"

"How should I know? Some one that Potts has bought, I suppose, she isn't his child that's certain; the fat boy over there in the other corner has known them for years, and they never had but one child, and they buried that years ago."

"Fat Hudson knows everybody," Mr. Jones remarked. "He has been on the road thirty years or more."

A curious fact, if true—the age of the gentleman in question being stated every day by his exhibitors to be just twelve years. His hairless face and squeaky voice, and his general aspect making such a story just possible, and no more.

"There are all sort of stories about her."

Mrs. Jones replied to her husband's speech. "But she ain't Potts's girl, that's certain, any one can see that."

"I could tell 'em the real tale," her husband said, reflectively, taking another pull at the beer as he spoke, and leaving hardly enough to wet his wife's lips.

"Law, could you, Bill—who is she?"

"The child—the baby. Don't you remember?"

"Never!"

"She is though. I had hold of her hand and talked to her. It's the same child; it might be a pot of money to us if we only knew what to do."

"Ah, but we don't, Bill; you see we never knew the names of those people, or where they came from, and Nannie Beaton kept a close mouth and never told anything, if she knew anything to tell, which she didn't. They were as close with her as they were with me. I'll keep my eye on Mr. Potts and his Snowdrop, and something shall come of it or my name's not Bill Jones."

Circumstances over which he had no control came in the way of Mr. Jones taking the way to the next fair by the same route as Professor Eglantine; a couple of bailiffs, of whom he had timely warning, made their appearance in search of him, and he was glad to escape by making an unexpected detour, and shooting across the country to quite another part, he avoided being arrested for that time, but lost sight of little Snowdrop and her protectors, for awhile at least.

The Professor and his entertainment went on swimmingly from place to place, drawing, as he declared in his bills, "the elite of beauty and fashion," everyone to see little Snowdrop and her wonderful performances. At Warwick they met with unprecedented success. It was the race week, and the castle and all the gentlemen's houses in the neighbourhood were full of guests, all sorts of frolics went on, and amongst the rest visits to the shows were not forgotten; and Snowdrop began to think she was making her fortune.

Ladies and gentlemen came to see her, and her tambourine oftener held silver than copper in these blissful days. The weather was lovely, and her foster mother did her utmost to attire her as resplendently as possible. The result of her efforts was good, for she had capital taste, and Snowdrop looked less like a showman's child than most of her class.

Out of business she was invariably neat and clean, a fact that helped a great deal in the respectability of the concern had they known it, but it was not done for effect; cleanliness was part of the nature of Job Potts and his wife, and they could not have lived in the squalor endured by many of their companions on the road, whose purses were far longer than his own.

"Who is for the show ground to-day?" was asked on the second day of the Warwick Fair, at the breakfast table of one of the best and wealthiest houses in the neighbourhood, and half a dozen merry young voices answered and declared that everybody was going. The Fair was a source of amusement not to be missed, and the questioner, a fair-haired pleasant-looking young gentleman with frank merry eyes turned to a lady by his side, who had not spoken.

"Will you go, Lady Wrexham?" he asked. The lady, still young and eminently beautiful, looked up indolently.

"Isn't it a great deal of trouble?" she asked. "That's just as you take it," he said. "We all think it good fun."

"But what is there to see?"

"Oh, all sorts of things; there's a pig-faced lady and her silver trough, dressed in blue satin and white kid gloves, the picture is outside if you don't believe me; then there's a wonderful child there that does the mysterious lady business to perfection. Tells fortunes; reads thoughts; and is said to have been purchased from the Grand Cham of Tartary, whoever that may be, and brought over in a specially constructed balloon for the benefit of the British public, and all for the small charge of one penny."

"Hadden't you better turn showman yourself, Fortescue?" asked a gentleman who entered at the moment. "You surely have mistaken your vocation. What are you trying to persuade my wife to do?"

"To go to the shows with us; we are making up a strong party for the occasion—an occasion which may never occur again to any of us," he said, relapsing into the mock gravity with which he had spoken before, and which was inexpressibly ludicrous.

Lord Wrexham laughed, and turned to where his wife sat.

"Are you going with this crack-brained set, Laura?" he asked with a laugh.

"Yes, if you will come, too," she replied; Mr. Fortescue says it is funny, and I want something to amuse me."

"And to occupy me, too," she might have said; for her ladyship was one of the most indolent of women, and could seldom be roused to any exertion. Lord Wrexham promised for them both, and the party was arranged to start after luncheon, and get to the ground where the shows were just about the time when the fair would be at its best and the exhibitions at their brightest and busiest.

CHAPTER V.

ALL THE FUN OF THE FAIR.

LADY WREXHAM, who was making her toilette before her glass to go out with the merry party to the ground where all the shows were congregated, was a much envied woman. A beauty and an heiress, she seemed to have everything that this world could give her. Her husband was the most generous of men and denied her nothing; and she never heard a harsh word from his lips. Her little daughter was as pretty as a child could well be, and the granddaughter of a princess to boot.

She was spoken of as one of the best dressed women in London, and her equipages and servants were pointed out by her friends as patterns of what such things should be. She had Wrexham House in Worcestershire, one of the most beautiful places in England, for her autumn residence. A house at Ventnor when she wanted sea air, and a town house that was the envy of all the fashionable world for its furnishing and arrangement.

Yet with all this she generally looked as if there was something wanting in her life, some screw loose in the domestic machinery that made everything look out of gear. She was an indolent, discontented-looking woman. And yet those who had known her as a girl remembered her as one of the gayest and brightest of the many eligible young ladies of her year, and the handsomest of all the *débutantes* that were presented to the Queen in the particular season.

Her marriage had brought the change about. How or why no one could tell, but the alteration had come upon her from the day on which she had taken Rupert Carlyon, now Lord Wrexham, "for better or worse" in the little church adjoining her father's house. Everybody said what a pretty affair her wedding was. She chose to be married at home among her own people, preferring it to a grand society wedding at a London church, and the day was one to be remembered for many a year afterwards by the poor of "Cross Waters" parish.

It was a love match, at least the world said so; but there were whispers, how do such whispers get about first, I wonder?—that the

gentleman at least was rather averse to the match than otherwise, and that the affair had been settled between Lord Wrexham, the father of the bridegroom, and the bride's mother, a widow, who was still young enough to think of taking a second husband, and who found her heiress daughter an inconvenient incumbrance, as she could not touch the young lady's money.

So that Laura, Lady Wrexham, was not altogether a happy woman, but this sunny morning at Warwick, she seemed to have laid aside all her woes, and to be bent on being amiable and pleasant.

Mr. Fortescue took charge of her, leaving Lord Wrexham to join the young ladies, to whom he made himself wonderfully agreeable, and made them think what a pity it was he was appropriated by such a lackadaisical woman as his wife.

The fun was at its height when the party reached the ground where the shows were erected.

Mr. Fortescue piloted his party through the crowd without much trouble, and they saw nearly all there was in the various entertainments, except in Professor Eglantine's booth. They were just about to depart, but "one more show, ladies and gentlemen," Mr. Fortescue said, as they came out of the pony and dog booth; "I have reserved the best for the last."

"Nothing horrible," pleaded Lady Wrexham.

"I don't suppose there's anything of that sort," the young man replied; "however, we won't try it; we'll leave the monsters to the rustics here, they seem to like horrors."

Somehow there was a different appearance about the booth of Professor Eglantine—something apart from the others, as it were—as if the proprietors were more refined than their fellows. There was a picture—a work of art—representing the professor and Jeremiah, with Madame Vanderwitz in gorgeous array, superintending the performances of Venus and Pluto. But there was nothing remarkable or grotesque about it, and there was no bawling or shouting from the platform in front, only Job Potts, arrayed in tights and spangles, leading a little girl by the hand up and down for the crowd to see.

"That's the child," Mr. Fortescue said, as the little one kissed her hand to the people, and laughed a natural blithe laugh at something that was said to her.

They looked at her with interest, wondering somewhat at her appearance. The man looked every inch a showman, and the woman who stood behind them, as if to give effect to the whole, evidently belonged to the strolling fraternity. She was arrayed in a tight-fitting costume that had been made for acrobatic performances at one time, but which she had supplemented in an odd and not ungraceful way with drapery, that made her look curious certainly, but by no means awkward or ungainly. She had an eye for colour, and an artistic way of doing things that made the women of her acquaintance envy her, and wonder why their things, though often much more expensive than hers, never looked half as well as Madame Vanderwitz's.

The child looked like a being of another world beside them; they were all spangles and glitter, she had not a vestige of ornament about her; her beauty was ornament enough, and she was singularly beautiful now that the famine was scared out of her face, and her cheeks had the roundness of healthy childhood. It was more beauty of expression than actual feature, for, analysed as it were, her face was faulty; but the great eyes, so soft, sweet, and loving-looking, went straight to the hearts of every one that saw her, and made people speak of her as the loveliest child they had ever seen.

She was dressed in white. Whatever the trouble was, Madame Vanderwitz would never grudge it in getting up the muslin petticoats to the requisite softness and purity. Her draperies did not stick out round her after the fashion of most of the show children, and there were many on the ground, who capered and attitudinized on the platforms of the various

shows, but hung with a grace and softness that would have done credit to the dresser of the best artiste in London. On her feet were neatly-fitting black shoes, the work of Madame herself, and round her waist a sash of bright red, the only colour about her, which contrasted well with her hair, which was long and curling, and evidently well cared for.

"What a remarkable looking child," Lady Wrexham said, "she looks like a princess in disguise, she can't be the child of those people. What makes you stare at her like that Rupert; have you ever seen her before?"

Lord Wrexham made no answer; he was gazing at the child with a far away look, as if he were thinking of something very different from the scene around him.

"Whom does she remind you of?" one of the young ladies said, arousing him from his reverie.

"No one that I know of; the little girl, you mean; I am sure I don't know."

"She's so like your little Laura," the young lady said.

"Don't you think so Lady Wrexham?"

"I am not quick at seeing likenesses," her ladyship replied, somewhat shortly. She had seen the resemblance, and thought it shocking that a showman's child should be like her cherished daughter, even in an accidental resemblance of hair, and so forth. The children were both dark. There was no other likeness between them.

"I don't see that likeness," Mr. Fortescue said, as they waited for the crowd inside to clear away before they ventured up the steps, "but I do another."

"To whom?" asked several voices at once.

"To a cousin of mine," was the grave reply. All the young man's buoyancy seemed to have vanished for the nonce. "No one I have ever spoken of to any one here. Her's was a sad fate I am afraid, though no one ever knew what became of her. She was only a girl at school, and some one enticed her away; I can see her face in that child's, my poor little cousin."

"Have you any fancy regarding her?" Lady Wrexham asked her husband somewhat spitefully. "Everybody seems to be finding her like some one. Do you think her like Laura?"

"In the matter of hair certainly; Laura's eyes are blue, that child's are dark. She certainly reminds me of some one, but it is not easy always to name a likeness, even if it strikes you. Some one that I have seen the little one is certainly like. I shall remember whom, perhaps, sometime."

He spoke carelessly and as if the subject bored him, and they all went into the show presently, and were received and shown to the best seats the place afforded by Jeremiah, who was as gorgeous in the matter of apparel as his master, and much more nondescript. Pluto, snuffing about, presently came and put his nose into Mr. Fortescue's hand, thereby testifying his approval of the party, and putting them into a good humour to listen to his master's antiquated jokes, and little Snowdrop's wonderful performances.

(To be continued.)

INFLUENCE OF LOVE.—Love and appreciation are to woman what dew and sunshine are to a flower. They refresh and brighten her whole life. They enable her to cheer her husband, when the cares of life press heavily upon him, and to be a very providence to her children. To know that her husband loves her, and is proud of her, and believes in her; that even her faults are looked upon with tenderness; that her face, to one, at least, is the fairest face in all the world; and the heart, which to her is the greatest and noblest, holds her sacred in its inmost recesses above all women, gives her a strength, and courage, and sweetness, and vivacity, which all the wealth of the world could not bestow. Let a woman's life be pervaded with such an influence, and her heart and mind will never grow old, but will blossom, and sweeten, and brighten in perpetual youth.

THE LANE IN THE WOOD.

WHEN I went to school in the olden time
With the rest of the youthful band,
By the greenwood lane, when the golden prime
Of autumn was over the land;
Backward and forward I looked in vain
To see where the end might be,
But never a curve had the rustic lane
As far as the eye could see.

When the sky was blue and the earth below
Was bright with blossom and spray,
I wandered as far as I dared to go,
But the end was farther away;
And it seemed to my youthful fancy plain,
As meadow and hill were passed,
There was never an end to the long green lane
That has grown so short at last!

Oh, the hours I spent in the greenwood old!
My dreams under bush and bough!
My early love, and the tale I told
To one who is with me now!
We strolled along in the fading light,
The maiden I loved and I;
And for once the lane was too short that night,
Wherever the end might lie.

Hopes that were born on that greenwood ground
Are vanished and dead to-day;
The end of the lane I easily found—
It never was far away!
But some of the plans were not made in vain,
Their lives with my life still blend;
I follow them now as I trod the lane,
And I know I shall reach their end!

SOPHIE.

SWEET INISFAIL.

A ROMANCE.

By the Author of "The Mystery of Killard," etc.

CHAPTER XX.

PAST AND FUTURE.

THERE is nothing a man can do which will more help him to regain the average level of his ordinary thoughts and spirits than to take a walk. If a man is active, it will stimulate his activity, and he will wish for some occupation making more demands upon his resources, physical or mental; if a man is indolent, it will, so to speak, stimulate his indolence, that is, it will cause his mind to dwell with pleasure on thoughts of repose and restful luxuries; if a man's mind turns towards martial deeds, it will quicken his valour and make him eager for the charge or the breach; if a man is a poet, odd fragments of verse will, like unexpected visitors, drop in occasionally to cheer and amuse his mind; if a man be a money-lender, visions of swift accumulations of wealth will come before his eyes, blown from the four quarters of the heavens like drift snow.

Now, Joseph Isaacs was a money-lender, and one by no means of a painfully nice or scrupulous conscience. At the time he displayed such distress to Manton, although he might not have had a thousand pounds' balance at his banker's, for he would have considered it the unforgivable sin to leave so much money at such poor interest as a bank would pay, he could have got fifty thousand pounds on securities in his possession in less than an hour. He had thought that making seventy-five pounds that day, in addition to the two hundred per cent. per annum realized out of the transaction with Manton, was a very fair day's work. But now that he was refreshed by a quiet walk round Stephen's Green, he did not see why, thus early in the day, he should consider the day's work closed.

Manton had spoken bitterly of having had to pay fifty per cent. for three months. Now,

as a matter of fact, all the eight hundred pounds was represented, as far as cash was concerned, by the first twenty-five advanced to Frederick Manton. This was the way in which that advance was made and that fearful load of interest accumulated:

Frederick wanted twenty-five pounds. He had by him cuttings from old newspapers describing the telegraph fraud of many years ago. He had also by him a prospectus of the new Building Society of London. He had heard that Joseph Isaacs was a man who took great risks at long prices. Frederick at that time was stationed in Dublin. He went to Isaacs, showed him the newspaper cuttings, the prospectus of the Building Society, with his brother's name as secretary, and a bill for twenty-five pounds, bearing his own and what purported to be his brother's signature.

He explained to Isaacs that he himself should never be able to take up the bill, but that his brother could not refuse doing so, as in any court of law to which he might be brought, he was liable to be cross-examined on that telegraph office matter of many years ago. Such a cross-examination would, of course, oblige him to retire from the secretaryship of the Society. He had for salary, then, three hundred a year; it had been increased by fifty since.

Isaacs saw the position at a glance. He saw that George could not refuse to pay this forged bill. Frederick had indicated to him that the signature was not genuine, for if he did so he would be sure to lose his situation, a thing he would scarcely allow to happen for the sake of a paltry five-and-twenty pounds.

Isaacs told Frederick Manton to call in a week. By that time the money-lender had made inquiries in London and found out that Frederick's representations were correct.

When Frederick came he handed him five five-pound notes.

"And you are charging me no discount?" said Frederick.

"No," said the dwarf, with a smile. "I am sure you want all the twenty-five yourself, or you would not trouble your good brother about such a trifle."

When that bill was due, Isaacs wrote to George saying he held such a document, but would not press for settlement if George would sign the enclosed across the face.

George, who was completely taken aback and desired at all risks to get that forged document into his hands, although at the time he could easily have paid the five-and-twenty pounds, signed the bill for forty and returned it.

From that moment Isaacs had him in his hands. By threatening to disclose the whole story and declining to take a settlement when the forty-pound bill became due, he got George deeper and deeper into the mire, until the gross sum had come to be eight hundred pounds. Believing that this was the utmost he could ever hope to extract he had resolved to realize at last, if he could. The telegram from Clonmore had put the notion into his head of squeezing another hundred out of his victim.

As he strolled down Grafton Street, after his walk round the Green, he resolved upon writing a letter. When he got to his office he went into his dark, dingy room, set pen, ink and paper before him, and produced the following letter:

"Rook Street, Dublin, 6th May, 18—.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Your brother paid me a visit to-day, and behaved like a gentleman. He paid me the full amount of my claim, and was good enough to make me a small present in consideration of the various kindnesses and indulgences which I have shown him through this very satisfactory transaction. I have to thank you for the introduction you gave me to him, and if you will permit me I should like to make you a small present in consideration of the kindness which you have done me; for this transaction has not, I am happy to say,

been without profit. I enclose you my cheque for twenty-five pounds, and shall be glad to hear from you with a view to business at any time you may require my advice or services.

"Yours very faithfully, "JOSEPH ISAACS.
"To Frederick Manton, Esq., Clonmore."

The letter inside was addressed to Frederick Manton, Esq., Clonmore. The envelope which was to carry it to its destination bore the words: "Mr. Edward Pryce, Telegraph Office, Railway Station, Clonmore."

While Edward Pryce was reading Joseph Isaacs' letter next morning, Mr. Flynn, Fitzgerald's attorney, was busy with papers which would facilitate the sale of Michael Fitzgerald's property to Walter O'Grady for the sum of twelve thousand five hundred pounds, cash.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE RULING PASSION.

THERE are few men, even though bachelors and living in a quiet town where food and lodgings are cheap, and where the ostentatious display of great towns or capitals is unknown, to whom the sum of five-and-twenty pounds would not seem of moment. Although Isaacs' cheque represented one quarter of Edward Pryce's salary, it seemed to him but a paltry affair. No doubt, if he were to throw it into the fund from which his current expenses were drawn, it would very materially alter the aspect of a whole year's living at Clonmore. In this town the necessities of life could be obtained at what London or Dublin housekeepers would regard as almost a nominal price. And the difference between the hundred a year salary Edward Pryce drew from the telegraph office and the hundred and twenty-five pounds a year made by Isaacs' cheque would enable an unmarried man to make a distinct difference in his social surroundings in that town.

But Edward Pryce, as he was known to the telegraph authorities of to-day, and Frederick Manton, as he was known to the telegraph authorities of years ago, had no desire whatever to add to the comfort or dignity of his position in Clonmore. Out of his hundred a year he was able by economy to save twenty-five. He regarded the seventy-five he spent on his lodgings, clothes, and food, as simply the interest on a mortgage held by Death upon his life. In order not to die he paid seventy-five pounds a year in various sums to various people. He no more regarded these payments as portion of his income than the air he breathed as an equivalent for the indirect taxation he paid. But at the first five pounds over and above the seventy-five he considered that his income began. With this he could do as he pleased. He was lord and master of this, as a despotic monarch is lord and master of the fortunes of his people; and with this first five free pounds, and with each of the other four free sums of similar amount, it pleased him to do the same thing—to bet.

Years ago, when Frederick Manton escaped from England with the bulk of the money he had nefariously won, no energetic steps were taken to pursue him. For a while he had concealed himself in various small Continental towns, taking care to live frugally and discreetly, so as to attract no attention to himself or his condition. He was in possession of several hundred pounds, and yet he spent little more than the common workmen whose quarters and society he frequented, and side by side with whom he often did little jobs requiring no technical skill.

But ever before his eyes he had one set purpose—one lodestar guided him forward, and he moved, driven by irresistible impulse.

If Frederick Manton had had a conscience at the time he committed the fraud in the telegraph office, it might have seemed to himself that his crime was mitigated by the fact that it was committed in counterpoise of

another crime. The telegram which he had intercepted ran thus:

"From John William Beauchamp, London, to Edward Fitzgarth, Watteringham.—I am afraid Corsair must win."

That was all. But Frederick Manton knew that "John William Beauchamp" was an assumed name for the owner of the favourite, and he took it for granted that this was the owner's final and fraudulent instruction to the jockey to "pull" the favourite and let Corsair, the second favourite, or, in fact, any other horse, win. As a matter of fact, the interception of this telegram gave the victory to the favourite. From this telegram, Frederick Manton was sure that the jockey and owner knew that the favourite, bar accidents, could win. Upon this, he backed the favourite with all the ready money he had, all the money he could borrow at so short a notice, and all the credit he could get with friends and acquaintances on the course.

The rest of the affair was simple. The favourite was telegraphed as winner to all provincial towns. To London word was sent that Corsair had come in first. Thus "John William Beauchamp" had every reason to believe his fraud had been successful, and therefore, of course, made no inquiries about the telegram to his jockey.

Gradually it stole round indirectly to London that the favourite was the winner. "John William Beauchamp," although at first he made some inquiries respecting the message which had miscarried, thought it prudent to say no more about the matter; and having by this transaction practically severed his connection with the turf, and by the failure of this scheme ruined himself for life, he retired hastily to the Continent, and was heard of in England no more. As a matter of fact, this telegram of his never became notorious because no searching inquiry was ever made respecting it, but the clerks at the London office where he had handed it in would in all likelihood remember him and the name he gave in connection with the event, owing to the excitement caused by Frederick Manton's false news. Besides, as the owner did not succeed in this fraud and had lost ten times more than he could pay, flight was his only resource.

Thus it was that, upon the whole, the act of excitement in connection with that telegraph office affair of years ago died out soon; so that at the end of twelve months Frederick Manton came to the conclusion that, without incurring any great risk, he might once more make his appearance in large cities.

He had in this time done something to disguise himself. Hitherto he had been clean shorn and kept his hair close; now he allowed his beard, moustaches, and whiskers to grow. He wore his hair almost down on his shoulders. Then gradually and by short stages he approached one of the great gambling hells of the Continent.

Here were gaiety and dissipation of all kinds. Bands played in exquisitely laid-out gardens, concerts were given in palaces of art, wine flowed, beauty shone, poverty was invisible, disease was ignored, death was tabooed, despair was cast out, hell and heaven were expunged, right and wrong took the form of good or evil luck, success meant vice, bankruptcy virtue, and virtue death.

Here Frederick Manton got better clothes than he had heretofore worn, and adopted an improved style of living.

He began by lounging idly, carelessly, through the halls and gardens attached to the gambling saloons. His intention was that his figure might become familiar before his conduct had become notorious. He had a system which must infallibly win. He was no fool. He knew that all inveterate gamblers at these tables followed systems which they believed must inevitably win, but he had the utmost scorn for these poor infatuated dullards. He was aware that if he played at these tables on level terms he should in the long run have to pay two-and-a-half per cent. for the pleasure of playing and

taking a level one to one. Thus, every forty shillings he put down on that table as a level bet was placed against only thirty-nine shillings of the bank's.

But Frederick Manton did not mean to play level. He meant that he should have an advantage of the ground more than compensating for the one in forty against him. A friend of his had, a few months before the telegraph office affair, been stopping at this town of Kleinburg, had never betted a sovereign, but had wandered much about through the gambling-rooms, and had been a close observer of the company, the boards, the systems, the croupiers, the attendants. This friend had observed one small fact to which he attached no importance, and which he told Frederick Manton of carelessly and with the rattle-pated impetuosity which characterized all the narrative of his foreign experience. Frederick had carefully laid aside in his memory this one particular fact, and he resolved that if ever he could get sufficient money to insure him against absolute ruin by mere chance, he should start at once for Kleinburg, and, playing with all the caution and clearheadedness of a mere mathematician in pursuit of discovery, try what could be done with the secret he possessed.

Now he was here, a young man, and in all the attractions which could lure hot-blooded youth from the pursuit of a cold and almost abstract calculation. It is more than likely that but for the secret he possessed he would never have ventured to intercept and falsify telegrams, but the notion that, by using the discovery his friend had made, he might win an enormous fortune, had overcome his last scruple, his final power of resisting temptation.

At last he began to play. His stakes were small, and he always took low odds. One to one, two to one, four to one, in half-sovereigns, were his first ventures on the gaming-table. He had come early that evening, had stayed late, and had never moved from one position at a certain table. The fever and excitement of the high play going on around him had no more influence upon him than the wind upon a rock. Every time the ball sped, hundreds of pounds in gold and notes might change hands without causing his eye to wander from his own modest coins. Time after time his money was swept away, time after time he found the money belonging to the bank pushed on the squares he had backed. He never doubled, but, when he won, withdrew his winnings calmly, mechanically, and let the game go on at the old stakes. There were those at the table who played for less than he, but there were none so indifferent to the chances of the game. Ten losses of one to one no more provoked excitement in him than alternate winnings. Those who were playing near him turned away in disgust at the cold-blooded monotony of his speculations, and those who looked on found nothing to interest them in his game. Now and then an Italian, a Frenchman, a Russian, or a German, spoke to him, expostulated, and showed him how much better could be done. He shook his head without replying verbally, and went on with his mechanical, spiritless game. Those who lost heavily cursed him in their hearts for his self-containedness and phlegm, for he had managed to sit playing all the night with no more than thirty or forty pounds before him, while they had lost twenty or thirty times that sum in a few hours. Those who had won regarded him with scorn as a white-livered gamster, who timidly sipped the intoxicating cup of play and set the cup down without once taking a manly draught.

No one could say whether he had won or lost that evening. He had taken gold out of his pocket as occasion arose, and none of those who watched him could say when he left the table whether he returned more to his pocket than he had taken out of it.

When he got to his lodgings that night he found he had won six pounds ten, went to bed with an easy heart, and slept soundly.

Next evening he repeated the former system.

He won five pounds. Upon this he made up his mind to double the stakes, to lay sovereigns instead of half-sovereigns, and to adhere to that amount and to his present system until the rooms were closed for the season.

Upon leaving Kleinburg, he found himself three thousand pounds richer than the first evening he began to play. He could have easily made that three thousand pounds twelve, if he had chosen, but he remembered the fable of the woman who killed the goose which laid the golden egg. Although he was seen to play there every night, always standing at the one place, always backing the same chances, always laying the same stakes, people did not know exactly whether he won or lost; and the general impression was that he was merely amusing himself by adopting a system so dead and alive that it could neither make nor mar the fortune of any man who was not absolutely poor.

It was his intention to return to Kleinburg next season and repeat the tactics of the one just over, only in the coming year he resolved to be bolder, and, at least, double his stakes.

But if the general public frequenting the gambling rooms had no clear idea of whether he won or lost, the croupier and inspectors had formed a very clear notion of the side on which the balance lay. They had formed even a rough notion of the sum, and put down the losses of the bank to the impassive Englishman at not less than two thousand pounds. When the rooms were shut, inquiry and examination were made into this matter, and the secret was discovered which had helped Frederick Manton to his three thousand pounds.

His Watteringham friend had told him that while lounging through the gambling rooms before the play began, he had observed that one particular portion of the brass rim in which the ball ran retained the whitening longer than any other portion of the brass channel, and required a great deal more rubbing than all the rest besides. Upon this fact Frederick Manton came to the conclusion that there must be some kind of dinge or hollow in this portion of the rim, and inferred from this conclusion that this dinge or hollow could not but exercise a checking influence upon the course of the ball; and on this assumption he based his system and won the money.

Next year he returned to Kleinburg. He began as usual at his old place. He doubled his former stakes, as he had determined upon, but with very different results. His gain had been steady before; his loss was as steady now. At the end of a week's play he found he was poorer by a hundred pounds. How could this be accounted for? The doubling of the stakes ought simply to have produced a doubling of the winning. In all other respects his system of this year was identical with that of last.

Early one afternoon, before play had begun, and when the attendants were clearing up the rooms, he strolled through with apparent unconcern. He watched the polishing of the brass groove in this particular table. He saw that the attendant used whiting, as his friend had described, but he failed to see that one portion of the groove required more rubbing than another. He asked the man about the table. The man answered him that this was a new table, newly fitted in all respects.

Thus Frederick Manton was reduced to the ordinary level of those who frequented the gaming-rooms of Kleinburg, and if he chose to play at all he should now play with the certainty of losing, unless he believed his luck capable of overcoming the odds of one in forty against him.

Now he played recklessly, without system. He won and lost fortunes every week. For at the beginning luck seemed determined to befriend him more than the defect in the table had befriended him previously. But his luck did not last through the season, and before the rooms were closed Frederick Manton was a ruined man.

After this, and when he had gone through dire vicissitudes and had suffered absolute

want, he got an appointment in the East under a French telegraph company and the assumed name of Edward Pryce, and remained there until he returned to England. As Edward Pryce, and a former clerk of the French company, he obtained employment once more in the British Isles, and was sent to Clonmore.

Now, with Isaac's cheque for twenty-five pounds in his pocket, and the twenty-five pounds he had saved from his salary during the year, he had at his disposal the first fifty pounds he had touched since his Kleinburg days. He thought of putting all his money on the favourite for the Derby, the betting against which was then five to one. If he lost, he should still be able to live; if he won, he should be able to gamble still more. And for an opportunity of gambling he had previously risked his liberty and forfeited his right to be considered an honest man. For a similar privilege now he would risk as much, if not more!

(To be continued.)

TO THE WORLD GUILTY.

CHAPTER I.

STANHOPE LEA.

AMONG the wooded hills of Berkshire, not half a mile from the river, and close to the picturesque village of Thorndean, stands a fine Elizabethan mansion, surrounded by extensive grounds. Any peasant will inform the stranger who is the owner of this mansion, and how, some years ago, the family were rich; whereas they have been since the last seven years, for their position, poor; yet they still cling on to the old place, and by care and economy are "fetching up" again, though they will never be as rich as they were once.

That mansion is Stanhope Lea, and the Stanhopes have had it since Elizabeth's time. It was the late owner, Sir Francis Stanhope, who squandered the money—he was so fond of horse-racing and the like. His daughter Gwendolen would have had "a deal of money" as well as his son, but she had nothing of her own now. Sir Francis died shortly after his losses, and left his children an encumbered inheritance. Lady Stanhope? Oh, she died years ago; her tomb is in the church yonder. She came from the north—Dormer the name was—nobody in these parts knew anything about her people. Sir Francis Stanhope's sister brought up the children; she is pretty well liked, visits the poor, and so on, and is kind in her way; but the people think her a bit hard and cold.

Sir Louis, who will be owner of Stanhope Lea in another two years, is very much liked. He is not at all strong, often ailing. Miss Gwendolen is not so great a favourite; she is older than her brother—twenty-four or five she must be. Oh, yes, maybe she will marry some day. Why not? Why not, indeed, except that even handsome well-born girls are apt to be overlooked if they lack the gilding of a good dowry.

A cold morning in January, 1871. The bare trees and snowy ground are little in consonance with the ideas that generally connect themselves with Berkshire and the Thames. You could not fancy a picnic among those leafless woods, nor a boating party on the steel-grey water flowing between snow-shrouded banks.

But within the breakfast-room at Stanhope Lea all is warmth and comfort, material comfort at any rate. The fire blazes high on the wide hearth, and the well-spread table gives assurance of ample fare for winter appetites.

In a velvet armchair close by the fire a young man of about twenty sits reading the morning paper.

A first glance would show only a handsome, fair face, intelligent and earnest, and a slight, well proportioned frame; but a more scrutinising gaze would discover in the scarlet hue of the lips the glitter of the large light hazel

eyes, signs that boded little good for the young owner of Stanhope Lea; nor was there the physical strength of early manhood in the frame, loosely knit, the chest somewhat contracted, the shoulders stooping, the whole attitude and disposal of the limbs showing that languor which a careful observer will never confound with the mere indolence of youth.

As the young man read his brow clouded, and more than once his long thin fingers clutched the sheet with angry impatience, and an exclamation not unlike an oath escaped his lips.

"Cameron, Cameron!" he muttered. "One cannot take up the paper without seeing his name; and he bears a charmed life—never even seriously wounded—why doesn't he get shot?"

The door opened as Louis Stanhope gave utterance to this charitable wish, and a lady entered who bore a sufficient likeness to the young man to proclaim her his sister; but the likeness was only superficial. Gwendolen Stanhope was cast in a different mould from her brother, tall robust, and finely formed. She gave—without any loss thereby of feminine grace—the impression of strength and health. She was essentially a type of the women who "wear well." At twenty-five she looked her age; at thirty-five she would seem to have barely gained a year. She was a fair Juno, lovely, proud, and stately; with full curved lips, and large eyes, light hazel like her brother's, but bright and restless—what some call flashing eyes,—and the transparent brilliancy of her complexion would have lighted a plain face with a certain charm. It was a face that invited study—none the less, but rather the more, that it indicated past and present suffering; yet, when the study was bestowed, the result was somehow disappointing; perhaps you could hardly say how you were disappointed, or what you missed; it was not expression; there was thought, if no great power; there was sentiment—even passion; but yet there was a something wanting, something, too, that repelled, if you could study the face as a calm, unbiassed physiognomist; you would not forget that fair countenance once seen; but you would find a strange sense of pain mingling with your recollection of it, almost provoking the wish that you had never looked upon it.

A slight flush deepened the rose tint on this woman's face, as her eyes fell on the paper her brother held, and as she bade good morning she stretched out an eager hand.

"Any fresh news, Louis? Let me look, please." The voice like the face—clear in tone, cultured in accent, yet lacking something. What was it?

"Pain all but taken," returned the young man, handing the paper to his sister. She took it, and sat down on the other side of the fire, holding it as she read so as to hide her face, and had you been able to watch her then you would have seen her eyes gleam and sparkle, and her lips quiver, and her bosom rise and fall, and it seemed as though a passionate resentment were contending with some softer feeling.

Louis lighted a cigarette and leaned back in his chair, gazing musingly into the fire. An exclamation from Gwendolen, who had turned a page of the paper, made him look up quickly. "Well, what is the matter?" said he.

"Louis—listen to this; it must surely be our cousin—*aunt Amy's* child!"

"Who must be? you are enigmatical."

"I am going to read, Louis; this is from the correspondent: 'War, as we all know, has its romances. One of these, a picturesque incident amid so much that is distressing, may interest many. There is an angel in the German Camp—so anyone—officer or common soldier—will tell you, and especially Cameron's Uhlans. The angel is a young English girl—a child whom the great Uhlans leader, Count Cameron, it seems, rescued from the hands of Franc-tireurs in the autumn, and has had charge of her ever since, waiting till the war is over to restore her to her relatives. The girl is the

daughter of a noble but impoverished English house—Vernon. I had the good fortune to see her yesterday, and do not wonder at the soldiers calling her "*angel*." She is remarkably beautiful, perfectly childlike, and most captivating in manner. She speaks French, Italian and English perfectly. "*Our Hyacinth*," as she is lovingly called, is adored in the ambulances, where the sick and wounded say the sight of her face is enough to do half the doctor's work."

"By jove!" said Louis, as his sister paused. "I believe you are right—it is *Amy's* child. I am certain. How strange—how very strange!"

"Perhaps," said Gwendolen, slowly clenching her hands as she looked steadily into the fire, and her voice was hard and cold, "perhaps the noble Earl of Lochisla, Count Cameron as they call him in the German army, will find this cousin of ours 'remarkably beautiful' a few years hence, and will amuse himself at her expense."

"Be sure he will do no more," said Louis, drily; "for Hyacinth cannot be much more than a pauper."

"She may not always be poor, though," said Gwendolen, looking up with a sudden flash in her eyes; "you know that cousin Gerard was in love with *aunt Amy*."

"And you think he might leave his money to *Amy's* child?"

"Why not? I am sure I do not grudge it to her."

"Nor I. I always thought *aunt Amy* was hardly treated. Curse that money! It is a good thing to have, but not a thing to sever ties of blood or—"

He paused abruptly as he saw the pain in Gwendolen's face.

"Forgive me, Gwendolen dear," he began; but she rose and laid her hand kindly on his shoulder.

"You have not offended me, Louis; and you know I have never thought it was the loss of wealth that was the influence at work with Lochisla."

"What else, then, Gwendolen?"

"How can I tell? Some entanglement that could not or would not be shaken off."

"Not—a wife, Gwendolen?"

Gwendolen started, and clenched her right hand. "Scarcely likely," she said, after a pause; "and yet, why not? Hush! Here comes *aunt Philippa*."

Tall, starch, and angular was the lady who now entered the room; fully forty-five in years, with smoothly-braided hair, already turning to iron grey. All the lines of a face that could never have been soft and winning were hard and stern; the square jaw expressed strong resolution, and every movement was as full of decision as it was deficient in grace. Yet, if this woman was not impressionable, she had at least one deep-rooted affection, and this was for her brother's children—Gwendolen especially, for her cold eyes softened strangely as she kissed the fair face, and hardly less warm—warmth of expression rather than manner—was her greeting of Louis.

So soon as the morning courtesies were exchanged Gwendolen put the paper in her *aunt's* hand, pointing to the passage she had read aloud to Louis.

"Tell me what you think of it," she said.

Miss Philippa read to the end of the paragraph with an unmoved countenance.

"*Amy's* child, undoubtedly," she said decisively; "and in *his* care—I wish her joy!"

A moment's silence. Then Miss Philippa stretched out her hand to the bell, and added as she rang—

"That child may one day be an inmate of this house."

"Hyacinth Vernon! How?" asked Louis, quickly.

"She has no near relatives save ourselves. Her father is old. Unless she marries before he dies what is to become of her then?"

"Well," said Louis, gently, "then let her come to us."

"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," said Miss Philippa, shortly. "Perhaps before that need arrives Count Cameron will

have married his *protégée*—it is the appropriate ending to the romance."

Gwendolen flushed crimson, and bit her lip till it grew white. Miss Philippa glanced at her and added,

"Doubtless if he came over here he would be fêted and worshipped as great military heroes ever are. Moral worth is lightly accounted of; dishonour is forgotten if a superstructure of fame won by bloodshed and rapine can be built on the ruins. It is all a hollow farce, the civilised world still worships Juggernaut though they call the idol by another name."

The arrival of breakfast interrupted Miss Philippa's bitter eloquence, and she sat down grimly to pour out coffee, while Gwendolen took up the paper again and bent over it, perhaps to hide her face.

What was stirring in this girl's heart? what memories of a cruel wrong—blending hatred with a love that perchance still lived; and was not another passion already unweaving its terrible coils, lifting its head, the most terrible, the most relentless of all passions—jealousy?

CHAPTER II.

HYACINTH VERNON.

ON a sunny April morning four years after the close of the Franco-German War an express train brought to Vienna—among other passengers—two English travellers, one of whom attracted some attention. Miss Philippa Stanhope, for it was she on whom many a curious gaze was fixed as she walked along the platform, certainly possessed no special graces to rivet general attention. Her appearance was, on the contrary, decidedly what ladies describe as "queer," and men, somewhat restrained by gallantry denominate more mildly, "peculiar." Her clothes were of such a fashion as became her years, but they always looked old-fashioned; her movements were prim, angular, and decided; she looked the "old maid" from the top of her bonnet to the sole of her foot, and her grim and unrelaxing countenance was precisely what foreign caricaturists love to depict as the type of the elderly British female of the spinster "persuasion."

Miss Philippa was, however, in blissful ignorance of affording amusement to the Germans, among whom she found herself for the first time in her life, and if she had known the truth, she was far too strong minded to be affected by it. She had travelled very little, and assuredly pleasure would not have led her so far as the Austrian capital. When it is said that her companion was a lawyer, it is enough to show that business was her errand, and that business was not a specially agreeable one. Philippa Stanhope had been openly opposed to the marriage of her gentle sister Amy with Marcus Vernon, who had nothing but his salary as an *attaché* to the English Embassy in Vienna, and now retribution had come upon her (though in the last few years she had greatly relented), for Amy's child was now wealthy. Gwendolen's prophecy had been fulfilled. Gerard Stanhope had died a fortnight ago, and had left everything to the child of his old love. So Miss Vernon would be the possessor of £700 per annum. Under these circumstances it had occurred to Miss Philippa that she would herself proceed to Vienna, and offer Hyacinth Vernon a home at Stanhope Lea in the event—which could not be far removed—of her requiring a home. Miss Philippa had not at one time viewed with very amiable feelings the prospect of Hyacinth's residence at Stanhope Lea, the beauty of that young lady might make her doubly dangerous; and her sometime connection with "Count Cameron" was anything but a recommendation in Miss Philippa's eyes; but Hyacinth very poor and Hyacinth with a comfortable income were two different individuals. True Miss Philippa's feelings were still not unmixcd, but if Louis should chance to find his cousin very fascinat-

ing, why he could afford to do so now; so Miss Philippa journeyed to Vienna with Gerard Stanhope's solicitor, Mr. Ringrove, to inform Hyacinth of her good fortune. While Miss Philippa waited in the station, Mr. Ringrove went to inquire for the residence of Mr. Vernon. He returned presently with the information that Mr. Vernon had lived in the Strasse, but he was dead, and had been two days' buried. His daughter had not yet quitted the house.

"Poor child!" said Miss Philippa, "our arrival, then, is most opportune."

They took a *flaker* and drove to the house indicated, a modest dwelling in a quarter betwixt fashionable and middle-class. A woman-servant came to the door and looked in some surprise at Miss Philippa, but when asked by Mr. Ringrove—who spoke a little German—if Miss Vernon was within, she replied yes, and ushered the visitors into an apartment handsomely furnished in an old-fashioned style and with a portrait of Marcus Vernon in diplomatic uniform frowning down on his grim visaged sister-in-law.

Miss Philippa sat on a hard chair of black oak and fidgeted uneasily, wondering what Hyacinth was like; how she would receive her relation.

But all doubts were set at rest when suddenly, but not abruptly, the door was opened, and a tall, slender, fragile looking girl, dressed in deep mourning, came in, a girl with pale creamy skin, and large heavily fringed violet eyes, and silky manes of golden brown curls clustering over her head and forehead, a girl wonderfully beautiful, looking a little haughty, but altogether fearless and without anything of forwardness, not at all embarrassed. She glanced keenly from Miss Philippa to Mr. Ringrove and back again, and advancing with that graceful gliding movement that some women have by nature and others vainly endeavour to acquire, she held out a delicate white hand with a charming frankness, and said with the most musical of voices and in most musical English, with a good deal of foreign accent,

"Are you my mother's sister? It is so kind of you to come!"

This mode of address—this free and self-possessed manner, as unlike that of an ordinary German girl as of an ordinary English girl, was somewhat staggering to Miss Philippa; but the manner, the smile, giving a flash of glittering little white teeth, the girl's beauty, were so bewitching that Miss Philippa's thin hand closed with involuntary and unwonted cordiality over the little hand offered, and with tears in her eyes, she muttered something about "Amy's child," seeking, perhaps, for a likeness, but finding none. "My dear child," she said, "I am your aunt. Will you kiss me?"

Hyacinth smiled again, went up to her aunt, put her arms around her, and pressed her soft curved lips to the hollow cheek, and said she was glad to see "her dear mother's sister."

Then Miss Philippa introduced Mr. Ringrove, and Mr. Ringrove explained that he personally came on business of great importance to Miss Vernon. He was a lawyer.

"Indeed!" said she, looking surprised, and, turning to her aunt, drew forward a chair, adding, "Please sit down. Do you know—you have heard, or you guess," glancing at her deep crape, "that my father is dead."

"Yes, my child," taking the girl's hand again, "and I am very grieved—" Here her eloquence failed her; but Hyacinth said quickly, "You are very good to say so. I should not want you to say more; you did not know him; you could not be sorry."

Miss Philippa collapsed. She did not know how to meet such an unconventional young person. So she let Mr. Ringrove do his part.

Had Miss Vernon, asked the solicitor, ever heard of a relative of her mother's, a Mr. Gerard Stanhope? No; Hyacinth had not heard of him. Mr. Gerard Stanhope, then, had died lately and left Miss Vernon all his personalty, which secured to her an income of £700 per annum. The great violet eyes opened wide! The girl seemed more as-

tonished than grieved. Mr. Ringrove had never before seen anyone receive the news of an accession of fortune in this manner. But after a pause Hyacinth half said—"But, Mr. Ringrove, this cousin did not know me. Why should he leave everything to me; perhaps I shall wrong someone who has a better claim?"

"My dear Miss Vernon!" the lawyer could not forbear smiling. "Be at rest. You will wrong no one."

A quick light flashed into the girl's eyes; she rose, dropped on one knee by her aunt's side, and asked softly,

"Did my cousin Gerard love my mother?"

"Yes, dear; but she—as you know—did not love him."

"Ah! I understand." She went back slowly to her seat, and listened gravely while the lawyer entered into further particulars; but from time to time she glanced at her aunt, very keenly; and when Mr. Ringrove paused, she turned to Miss Philippa and asked—"Did you want me to go with you to England, Aunt Philippa?"

"I came to offer you, my dear, a home with your cousins and myself. You have, I believe, no other near relatives, and you could not live alone. Will you come?"

Hyacinth did not answer immediately. She was not at all prepossessed in her aunt's favour. Miss Philippa was in every respect the antithesis of her beautiful niece, and Hyacinth thought she looked exactly like a picture in a comic journal. Nor was the young girl inclined to think that she would like her cousins very much, for when she had told her protector, Count Cameron, of her relations in Berkshire, he had started at the name; and spoke of having wronged them. She had not believed that, for she had loved this noble leader with all her heart, as he had loved her. Some cause there must have been to make an English Earl forswear his country, and serve in a foreign army, choosing even to be known by the title bestowed on him by the King of Prussia, and not by his own title; but Hyacinth could not believe he had been false to his honour. Since they had parted four years ago, rumours had reached her of "Count Cameron" having once been engaged to an English lady, whom he had deserted in a most heartless manner. The rumour had startled the girl without shaking her faith in the chivalrous soldier; but she could not reject it—after what Cameron had himself told her—as perfectly groundless. The English lady spoken of must be her cousin Gwendolen. Could she be happy with these people? would they like to have her with them? To be sure, she was not bound to remain with them if she was unhappy, or if they did not care for her; but she would risk it, chiefly for a reason of which more anon. She lifted her eyes to her aunt's face.

"It is very kind of you," she said, "to ask me, who am a stranger to you, to come and live with you; but if you will try me," with her vivid smile, "I will come."

"Very well, my dear." How would Gwendolen like this brilliant girl, with her dazzling beauty and fascinating manner, and her youth to crown all her charms? And Louis? Well, Louis would certainly fall captive very quickly. Hyacinth rose. "When do you want to return to England, Aunt Philippa? I can be ready in two days."

"In two days! So soon!"

"Why not? I am used to travelling. This house, you know, is not ours, only hired. We were poor; there is not much to do, and you will stay here? I am so sorry you were troubled to come, I could have gone alone. Oh, no one would hurt me."

Miss Philippa stifled her amazement; language failing her in which to express it, and Hyacinth begged Mr. Ringrove to stay also; but he would only remain till the following day, having, he said, important business in London which could ill afford to wait.

"We shall have dinner served in a short while," said Hyacinth, "and meanwhile you will take some wine?" But this was declined, as the travellers had partaken of refreshment at the station, and Hyacinth therefore showed

them to their rooms, herself waiting upon her aunt, and asking a few questions about England; but never speaking of her own change of fortune. This girl of seventeen, who had never been even well off, treated the acquisition of a snug fortune as if it had been a trinket. Not once did Hyacinth allude to Count Cameron, nor did Miss Philippa. In such questions as she did ask Hyacinth about herself she omitted the camp life in France, and the girl herself said nothing of it. She asked how old Louis was, and if he lived at home. Doubtless, she would be good friends with him; she was more used to men than women. The abrupt transition to utterly new scenes and people was taken in the most matter-of-course way, which need not have surprised Miss Philippa so much if she had reflected that Hyacinth had never been long in one place or country, save two years' study at Leipzig; but Miss Philippa moved in grooves, and Hyacinth Vernon put to rout every cherished prejudice of the prim old lady; nor did Miss Philippa ever find her artillery so feeble. With Gwendolen, haughty and self-willed as she was, her strictness and remonstrances had some effect. At Hyacinth Vernon's feet they fell harmless. At a prim look, or touch, or word she would open her blue eyes with a "What does it matter?" or laugh, and somehow, without in the least asserting herself, spoke and acted as she chose, and made Miss Philippa feel that it would be wise not to attempt anything like control. This cosmopolitan damsel, not yet turned seventeen, was fully able to take care of herself and of other people too. On the journey she was as good as a courier; she took the tickets and saw to the luggage, and to Miss Philippa's comforts, and, in fact, managed everything. There was no lack of attentions to so bewitching a maiden, and Hyacinth received all kindness offered with frank courtesy, and never a bit of a blush, however young and dashing the gentleman who offered it, and yet even Miss Philippa found it hard to think her bold.

At one station Hyacinth, whose beauty made her of course noticed everywhere, was even more stared at than usual, and Miss Philippa caught the words, "Count Cameron's Hyacinth," uttered by more than one in tones of respectful admiration. She glanced sharply and wonderingly at her young companion, and saw that the girl had coloured now, and deeply, but nevertheless she bowed and smiled to two or three soldiers who lifted their caps to her.

"What does it mean, my dear? Was it you they meant?" asked Miss Philippa, when they were seated in the train and it moved forward.

"Yes, that is what they often called me in the army."

"Indeed," said Miss Philippa. The tone was plain enough, and Hyacinth's glance half defiant, warned her to say no more; but Miss Philippa wondered if the name had any significance now; she wondered whether Count Cameron, who had only a few months before visited Falcon's Nest, a house which he possessed near Thorndean, would visit it again. But perhaps he had never lost sight of Hyacinth Vernon. Well, time would show. At anyrate Hyacinth's residence under the roof that sheltered Gwendolen Stanhope must separate the Uhlan leader from the child he had protected, who, said Miss Philippa, to herself, was a child no longer.

CHAPTER III.

FOR WEAL OR FOR WOE.

A CHILD no longer! Did Hyacinth herself know this? Were her memories of Errol Cameron all unclouded?—her longing to see him only what she had thought it would be?

She sat apart on the deck of the Antwerp steamer, looking down into the sea, and thinking—thinking of the man she had not seen for four years, and who had promised when they parted that she should see him again soon. He had wandered all over the world, and had not once written to her. Did she know now why? Did she know why he had said four years ago

that it was best they should not meet again? Did she know why her heart throbbed so wildly to think that he dreaded that meeting for his own sake even more than for hers?

Probably the girl could not have distinctly answered any of these questions. Her love for Errol Cameron had grown with her growth, and strengthened with her strength. For a long time she had looked forward to the promised meeting with a child's steadfast hope—a child's love.

She could not have fixed a period when that hope became dashed with a vague dread; a dread that grew and deepened: so that while at one time she had often and often pictured the longed-for moment—how he would take her in his arms as he used to do, and what he might say—now she shrank from that picture, and flushed and trembled if it forced itself upon her mind.

Yet she was scarcely conscious of this truth; she was so very young after all, and her love for Cameron, commencing in childhood, was so blended with—growing, as it did, out of—that childish love that there seemed to be no break—no marked change in its character.

Certainly she knew what future the count feared, and therein lay a root of bitterness. Count Cameron must have loved Gwendolen Stanhope; did his heart cling to her still? did he shrink from the temptation to be disloyal to her though the second love should not have power to efface the first?

If so, how wrong had Hyacinth been in her innocence to win from him a promise to see her again, nay, in any case how wrong, for she knew that for some reason his name was braided with dishonour, and love was forbidden him. The strong and deep longing to learn so much as was already known of the cause that had thus banished the Chief of Lochisla from his father's land, and made him the last of his house, had not been the least of the reasons that had influenced Hyacinth Vernon in accepting Stanhope Lea as her home.

Her faith in Errol Cameron remained as pure as in her childhood. That he deserved the shame that had fallen upon him she never for a moment thought. Why, then, should it blast his life? Why break his heart? Alas! was not that done already? What—to a proud and noble nature—can blot out the stain of dishonour? Love itself could not heal that wound, nor even lessen its pain; but must add to it. And what if Cameron's childlove had already become a memory?

How should he, Hyacinth asked herself, follow through the passing years a mere child; he whose heart was perhaps still with his last love, and whose life was filled with weighty matters, amid which a child and a child's love were like a leaf on the surface of a broad rushing stream? What, then, if the child only lived in his heart as he had seen her last? why not let it rest so? why keep him to a promise that might wreck his peace? But how release him?

A pure hearted woman cannot but shrink even in thought—how much more in act—from the idea that a man's affections are at her mercy, and Hyacinth's was one of those rare natures that flattery and homage cannot make self-conscious.

She knew she was beautiful: how could she choose but know? But of her power to make or mar men's lives she had, as yet, at any rate, no thought. She was still hardly more than a child, and to Cameron she felt she would still appear little different from the Hyacinth of four years ago. There was more pain in that impression than she was herself conscious of; but it grew greatly out of her profound reverence, her almost idolatrous love for Errol Cameron.

So Hyacinth mused and dreamed in the April sunshine, looking down on the dancing sea, and wondered if Count Cameron would come to England to keep his promise.

But Dover Pier was in sight now, and Miss Philippa must be seen to; so Hyacinth rose with a half sigh, and turned from dreams to prosaic reality. Yet not all prosaic; for the

white cliffs yonder bounded the land of which she had heard so often and had so much desired to see—her own land—and presently there would be a glimpse of London, and in time more than a glimpse. Hyacinth did not as yet know whether her cousins lived most of their time in the country; but she had no intention of doing so if they did. Her life of stir and excitement, and her tastes unfitted her for the monotony of country existence.

"Richard was himself again;" that is, Miss Philippa, as she stepped on to the Admiralty Pier, felt restored to her own personality. She was at home; she could speak English and be understood. Hyacinth's place was secondary here. But she seemed quite at her ease in this foreign land, and perfectly able to take care of herself.

In the train Miss Hyacinth shocked her companion by entering into conversation with an elderly and grave-looking Italian, who seemed to be a person of some distinction, and my lady, was speaking Italian as fluently as she spoke French and German. When Charing Cross was reached, and Hyacinth and Miss Philippa were alone, the latter could not resist uttering a warning and telling her young companion that in England people did not talk so freely to strangers.

"But," said Hyacinth, "the English are so stiff. That old gentleman I know by sight, though he does not know me. It is the Marchese —. I have heard him speak in the Senate."

"I did not know you spoke Italian."

"Oh, yes. I have been in Italy a good deal."

They did not on reaching London at once proceed to Paddington. Miss Philippa was tired with the transit, and so rested at the hotel till the afternoon, and took a nap on the sofa in the sitting-room she had taken. She was not a little horrified on waking up to miss Hyacinth, and as she rose and was about to ring the bell, lo, the door opened and that young lady, her plumed hat on her bonnie curls, came in, smiling, graceful, cool. Miss Vernon, it appeared, had sallied forth to take a limited view of London. Like Buchanan's "Little Miller," she "feared nobody,"—

"She pats the pavement with her fairy feet, With fearless eyes she charms the crowded street."

Charm it she certainly did. So fair a picture is not often seen in the Strand. But Mademoiselle was quite amused at her aunt's dismay. Oh, no one hurt her. They stared—why of course, and they were rude, and looked very grave—but there was no harm. She had been up as far as an ugly church, which was shut. The Strand was not handsome—it looked dirty and dull. Did they do good plays at the theatres she passed? Miss Philippa could not tell; she rarely went to theatres. She supposed Hyacinth would go to them alone!

"Oh, no," the girl laughed, "but I should not mind—not at all. It is just three, Aunt Philippa, and you ordered the cab for a quarter past, did you not?"

Hyacinth's large clear eyes were busy all the way to Paddington, but she said little, keeping her opinions, whatever they were, to herself.

"I telegraphed," said Miss Philippa, as they entered the train at Paddington, "to say we should arrive by this train; so the carriage will meet us, and most likely Louis will come with it."

"Was Louis like Gwendolen?" Hyacinth asked. "Gwendolen was very beautiful, was she not?"

"Why do you ask? Who told you she was beautiful?" said Miss Philippa somewhat tartly.

"No one told me, I thought she must be, that is all."

"I wish she was less beautiful. Beauty is no gain, Hyacinth, but the reverse."

But Hyacinth's blue eyes opened wide, and she smiled. The smile was soft and dreamy. The girl was thinking that she would not have Count Cameron less handsome, and for herself—she knew he loved beauty, and was glad



[FOR WEAL OR FOR WOE?]

that she possessed it. Why did maiden aunts generally depreciate good looks?

The sun was setting behind the Berkshire woods when the train clattered slowly into the little station at Thorndean, and Hyacinth, looking from the window, espied on the platform a young man fair and handsome, whose eyes, suddenly lighting on her face, flashed with a look of startled admiration. He sprang forward, and his hand was on the door as the train stopped.

"All right, Aunt Philippa," he said, smiling. "I thought it must be my cousin's face I saw at the window just now."

"And very glad I am to get home," said Miss Philippa, while Hyacinth drew back smiling, declining in the elder lady's favour the hand Louis had first offered to her as the stranger.

It was a pretty drive through country lanes bordered with hedges clothed in bright spring green, and as they mounted a slight ascent Hyacinth caught sight of the river. "Are you near the river?" she asked, turning to her cousin, "and do you boat?"

"We are near the river," he answered, "the Thames, you know; and sometimes we boat. Can you row?"

"Ah! yes, I am so fond of it. It is very pretty—this country. Ah! there is a castle like Rolandseck. Look," pointing to where, at about a mile's distance, a grey tower rose from among clustering trees. "Whom does that tower belong to?"

Louis Stanhope's face changed. He flushed slightly, and without following Hyacinth's glance answered—

"That is called Falcon's Rest."

"Falcon's Rest?"

But still the soft brilliant eyes came back to his face, "who lives there? who owns it?"

"No one lives there habitually, and it belongs to someone you know already—Count Cameron, the Earl of Lochisla."

"[Cameron!]" Her face flushed all over for a second. How the young heart leaped within her. It seemed as if Count Cameron were

suddenly brought nearer to her, though it was probably many years since he had been at Falcon's Rest, and he might never be there again. But quick as the light had come, the cloud fell on her mobile features. She was so grieved that she had forced Louis into the utterance of a name that was linked for him with a painful past.

"Pardon," she said softly, "I was wrong."

But Louis shook his head, and smiled a sweet smile, that touched the girl deeply.

"No, no; how were you to blame? You could not guess. He never told you of this place, then?"

"No, nothing."

"But you would know he had been in England lately?"

"How should I? I have not seen him during your years."

"Not since you were a child?" exclaimed Louis, surprised, and certainly pleased.

"No, not since he took me home after the war; and he has been in England lately?"

"Ay; only a few months ago—at Falcon's Rest."

Hyacinth's eyes sought the grey tower again, but she hardly saw it—a mist swam before her vision; her heart was beating fast—only a few months ago he was here—here, so close to where Gwendolen dwelt—why had he come?—what, but to seek reconciliation with Gwendolen? For no other reason would the chivalrous Cameron have acted in a manner that would almost be an insult to the woman he had loved, and—by his own admission—to the world at least, wronged. But if he had returned on that quest, it was clear he had failed; and in the bitter aching of her heart Hyacinth could scarce have told how much the pain was for his sorrow—how much for the thought that his love was for Gwendolen still.

Louis, looking at her, said to himself,

"Of course, Lochisla would not tell her the story of ten years ago; doubtless she thinks of him only as the hero of the Franco-German war; she shall know what manner of man he is; so that if she should chance to meet him,

she may be armed; for by Heaven he is a man who may easily persuade a girl to overlook anything, and she is witchery personified."

Hyacinth did not comment on her cousin's last words, nor did Miss Philippa make any remark, and the phaeton almost immediately drove into the grounds of Stanhope Lea. In another five minutes Louis drew up the ponies in style before the entrance of the mansion, and Hyacinth was looking up admiringly at the turrets and crockets of the venerable pile, and thinking how long, long ago her mother had played a merry child on the terrace, and later wandered there, dreaming of her young lover; and this, too, was Gwendolen Stanhope's house—perhaps on that wide terrace, among the flowers, Errol Cameron had stood with her,—Hyacinth started, and her eyes fell on a form, tall, fair, stately—standing there in the entrance—a beautiful woman with light hair and brilliant complexion, and full curved lips, half parted, while her large light hazel eyes rested on the perfect features of "Count Cameron's Hyacinth."

The girl sprang up the steps with outstretched hands—and sweet, half pleading smile, and Gwendolen took the little hands in her own and kissed the soft cheek, with kind words of welcome.

And so they met—these two—between whom an eternal barrier was set. If but for one second the veil of the future had been torn aside, would Gwendolen's lips have touched the cheek of "Count Cameron's Hyacinth?"—would not Hyacinth have shrunk in dread and horror from the clasp of Gwendolen Stanhope?—and turned back over the threshold just crossed? And yet when she passed under the roof of Stanhope Lea, Hyacinth Vernon took the first step on a road where she walked, blindly, yet steadily towards a goal her wildest dreams could not have pictured—a goal to which destiny led with unseen hands—nor opened the eyes of the blind traveller till it was reached—for weal, or for woe?

(To be continued.)



[WHOSE MINIATURE IS IT?]

NOVELETTE.]

HEARTS TO WIN.

CHAPTER I.

A FORSAKEN WIFE.

"My first, last love, the idol of my youth!"

Two women in mourning, in a spacious room with bay windows opening on to a wide sweep of gravel terrace, and beyond that, lawn and gardens, the elder of the two quite forty years of age, and evidently a confidential attendant; the other was a tall slight girl of twenty, lithe and graceful in every movement as a young panther, and perhaps as dangerous, if that word can be applied to the power of such superb and singular beauty as this girl's. Yes, there was power in every line of that statuesque face, power and depth and passion, and in all the rich wealth of a—

"Heart whose softness harmonized the whole."

Ah, how this woman could love! Why that painful look of trouble in the dark eyes?—on the young face? Not a happy face either, as twenty years should be; why does she pace to and fro, to and fro, with miserable restlessness in every movement, in the very twisting and untwisting of the slender fingers, as she moves, and each time she comes to the window, flings such a strained look of expectancy across to where the white road skirts the grounds, and passes the gate? Is she watching, girl-like, for a lover's step and form? It may be, but—look at her left hand; what is that on which the sunlight of early spring gleams each time she comes to the window? a broad plain gold band—a wedding ring!

"Why does he not come, Nurse Mary? why doesn't he come?" she said, passionately, at last. "He did get my telegram, sent on by

some one in Vienna who knew where he was, for he telegraphed from Monaco, as you know, that he would start at once. If he had done so, he might just have reached, yesterday, in time for his father's funeral!" she stopped her restless walk as she spoke, before her former nurse, long since her personal attendant and humble friend, and the elder woman dropped the needlework she held and looked up.

"I don't know, child," she said, with an odd mixture of intense tenderness for the girl present, and stern resentment for the man absent, "why you ever want to see him darken these doors, or any others where you are. No dear—let me speak my mind out once if I never do it again, for the whole thing has been about as monstrous, as cruel and wicked as ever man did—father and son both. You just saw him a few times when you were a wee lassie of five, just first left to his father's guardianship, and you never saw him again till you were fifteen, for one short day, one short day, when the old man took such advantage of my absence and you, being a mere child to do the shameful deed he had planned before—I am certain for some reason of his own—some base one too—"

"Mary—don't! don't!" said the other under her breath, "he is in his grave now, and—"

"Ay, time he was!" said the other woman, roused beyond control by the wrongs of her darling; "he forced his son to marry you—his ward—a child, who couldn't possibly know what you were doing in letting shackles be put upon you that must one day break your heart and wreck your life. He knew—for he said so to us both on his death-bed—that his son hated the very thought of the marriage, and yet he made him do it, though he left the house two hours after you came from church and never came back from that day to this, hard as his father tried to persuade him. It was bad enough simply to wed you to a man who hated you, but it was a thousand times worse to bind such a child to a man he knew so well to be a wild scamp, a gambler, at most a *roué* past reforming even then, if there had been an angel

to try it. It makes me mad, child, to hear you all these years called Mrs. D'Eyncourt, and to call you so myself before others—"

"Mary, oh Mary, hush! to you I am always Gabrielle, but I am his wedded wife, come what may, and," she said, locking her slender hands together like a vice, "I will not any longer be practically disowned and flung aside for worthless companions—the rivalry of dissipation. Don't look at me, nurse, as if I were mad. I know too bitterly what Locksley is, but he is only thirty still, and cannot, shall not be past all power or hope of winning yet. I know Mr. D'Eyncourt told me the very day after that miserable marriage, that he had forced it on because he had used my little property to pay a mortgage on his property and feared it would be discovered."

"And Mr. Locksley knew it then!" exclaimed Mary Bonham.

"No, Mary, he knew nothing of that wrong of his father's until it was used as the lever to compel the marriage."

"It does not make much difference, Gabrielle, that I can see; he'll only come home now (if he does come), because of the money that's left, and then go off again to waste it, though I don't know what he can be made of if he leaves you, now, child, for Heaven knows you have beauty enough to win any man."

"Ay," said the younger woman, with bitter cynicism, "if I were not his wife!"

She turned away and began her restless walk again, her heart heaving, the blood coming and going in the chiselled half dark face, paused by the window, and turned back once more, almost wringing her hands.

She was alone; Mrs. Bonham had quietly left the apartment.

Then Gabrielle D'Eyncourt drew from her bosom a small flat oval case, opened it, and stood gazing motionless on the miniature thus disclosed—a man, young, whose every chiselled feature bore the hall-mark of patrician—gifted,

indeed, with a dangerous dark beauty which might well make the beholder ask—

"What must its powers o'er beating hearts have been,
The genius speaking while the man was seen."

A wild picturesque beauty, that had a fascination all its own, whose bright careless smile seemed to challenge an answering smile; but, ah me! what a reckless face it was, what a world of deep strong passions, all too unguided, lay beneath the surface! Truly says Jean Paul that there are some "faces in which we read a story," and in this one, much too much of his life's story was written, terribly plain to the beautiful woman gazing on it. "A wild, reckless scamp, a gambler, almost a rascal!" Yes, she knew too well all that was true, "but past all reformation?"—no, she could not believe that, would not, dare not accept such a fearful dictum. Surely there is a singular sweetness, a softening tenderness lurking under all the bright carelessness of that smile, which seems to whisper, to her at least, of one little grain of gold left hidden away somewhere; of some hope that in the terrible gambling game begun for their two lives on their marriage-day, it might after all be possible for hearts to win.

"Yes, yes, it must, it shall be!" the young deserted wife murmured, pressing it passionately to her lips before she hid it in her bosom again. "You won my childish heart, husband, in a child's dim tenacious way, that did not fade in ten years; you held it afresh from that dark wedding-day, which between sunrise and sunset startled me from child to maiden, and left me a forsaken suffering woman for my first love and my last. But he must not see that yet—not dream I care for him," she said, the proud blood mounting to her velvet cheek: "he would but hate and perhaps scorn the fruit flung ripe at his feet. No—if unloved, hated I love, I am still a woman, and wedded wife though I be to him, he my husband shall lie suppliant at my feet before my lips confess that I have loved him all my life. I will win, but by turning his own weapons against him, and if he has pride and passion and heart left, stabbing him to the very core. If he has not—then Heaven help me!"

She covered her face for a moment at the thought, then started erect, pushed her fingers through the rich short masses of dark locks that curled all over her head and fringed the broad brow, and crossing to the window flung it wide, letting in a rush of flower-scented fresh spring air from the Highgate hills around.

The next minute she had stepped out upon the terrace, and resting one hand on a marble vase of flowers and lifting the other to half shade her eyes stood with that old straining, anxious, gaze, looking out towards the far white high road that wound away towards the mighty city itself; as she stood there watching, with her unconsciously superb pose and splendid beauty, the very ideal of

"A perfect woman, nobly planned
To warn, to comfort, and to command."

The next minute she heard the wicket-gate at the little lodge clang to, and a second after saw a tall, slight-built man coming with a light swift step across the lawn straight towards her.

CHAPTER II.

LOCKSLEY D'EYNCOURT.

To step back into the room behind her, and there await the new comer, was an instant instinct as instantly followed. How wildly the poor heart throbbed as she stood there on that hearth which had no Lares, outwardly so calm. He must have seen her, even in that brief moment, but had he, beyond guess work, recognized, at that distance too, in the woman the child of fifteen he had seen for no more than a few hours? Impossible; five years had changed her so much she knew, the more so—so everyone had told her—that at fifteen she had scarcely given distinctive promise of developing into such exquisite beauty as she possessed at twenty. Had she been mistaken?

she had heard no wheels; was it, after all, only—

The same tall graceful figure darkened the open window, passed within, and those two faced each other for one second in silence, the girl easily erect, though each breath came quick and painfully, the man half hesitating, puzzled, but with a look of scarcely veiled, even for a second, almost bold admiration.

"Pardon me, madam," said the soft mellow voice, her very heart knew, "but surely, am I addressing the lady who bears my name?"

"I am your wife, Locksley D'Eyncourt."

Do what she would she could not crush out all signs of agitation; the low rich voice would be unsteady, the heavy tears fill the dark eyes, the whole frame quiver with bitter pain as he started, flushing to the brow.

"Forgive me, if for a moment I was doubtful!" he said, quickly. "You are so changed in those five years. You got my telegram—am I too late? Is—Is my father—?"

She moved a step towards him as he faltered.

"He was buried yesterday, Locksley. I expected you there from your own telegram."

"It was not my fault, Gabrielle, believe me. I started from Monaco directly I had wired, leaving my courier to do everything and follow, but there was an accident on the railway that detained us all full eighteen hours; that made us miss a boat and so lose still more time: it was maddening. Were you with him? did he ask for me? don't keep back anything."

In his eagerness he touched her for the first time in that strange and painful meeting, for he laid his hand on hers, the touch thrilled every fibre of her being, and do what she would her eyes drooped a little beneath his.

"I was with him, who else should be?" she said, "and he asked for you constantly. Why did not you come when he was dying? The last place we had heard of you was Vienna, and I telegraphed there, it followed you to Monaco, I suppose."

"Yes," D'Eyncourt answered a little hurriedly, "but was that all, Gabrielle? did he say nothing, leave no message for me?"

She shrank back now, flushing painfully, voice and lip both unsteady.

"Yes, but, but—"

"Tell me, I must know, what was his last message?"

Pressing both hands on her heart, dreading the dark frown of anger, or hate, she answered very low—

"They were almost his last words, Locksley."

"Tell my son, if he ever comes back, to take care of his wife; tell him not to cast her off, for it is a marriage, however he may wish and try to disown it and her for another's sake."

A red flush sprang suddenly to the man's very brow, and the hands that had been tightly locked before him, clenched as he turned sharply aside; was it shame or anger? or both?

There was a minute's painful silence, then with that handsome reckless face still half averted, he said hoarsely:

"He could not have dreamed for a moment that, bad as I am, I should leave you to starve, but of course, you as much as I, must wish still to practically disown and set aside the miserable mockery of a marriage which he forced upon us both five years ago. You will scarcely care, I take it, to live with such a man as you know me to be, and I cannot rivet yet closer on myself the wretched fetters, the heavy shackles which I hated from the first. I will not give up the wild freedom of my reckless life for a mere empty ceremony, and obligations which are therefore a chimera, a fancy."

"Go on," she said, with the very quietness of intense self-suppression; "it is better, since we have met this once more that we should fully understand on what ground we stand. What are your intentions for the future, before I answer part of your speech?"

He turned quickly, and faced her now; a little startled, somehow, even taken aback by her manner; perhaps insensibly influenced,

more than she dreamed, by her beauty, despite her right of wifehood. But he said, coolly, even coldly,— "Having said so much there is only to add that I shall make you whatever allowance you shall consider right, and beyond that, each, as hitherto, go our own separate untrammelled way."

"Still," Gabrielle said, in the same manner, "you admit that the ceremony is a marriage; that the laws of Church and State so recognize it, and that it so far binds the freedom of each of us that neither can marry?"

"Yes, I am forced *de facto*, to recognize so much as that. I would break the bond asunder and free us both if it were possible."

"And as you cannot do that, you propose that we—I as well as you," she said, slowly, "should absolutely ignore every obligation and vow except any re-marrying, which that 'mere ceremony' would have imposed? You have, of course, done so all these years; equally, of course, you fully recognize in your plan of action, that you give me, your wife, to the letter, mark! the same absolute freedom from every vow which you claim for yourself, my husband!"

"What do you mean?" said Locksley, with a passionate start and flash in the dark eyes that told her her bold tactics were not mistaken.

"You I suppose scarcely wish to claim immunity from the vow of fidelity?"

"Why not?" she demanded coolly, though her bosom heaved, and her heart beat fast under her hand, as the strange battle drew nigh. "I do not contemplate or wish for liberty to lead a life that shames womanhood; but I claim, and will have the right which belongs to every one of God's creatures, to love, if true love comes in my way. Thank heaven, you are man enough to flash fire at the mere thought of disgrace in the woman who bears your name, but you are not man enough to shrink from doing a cruel wrong—ay, a cowardly deed just to keep your own wild freedom ungoverned, untrammelled. What! do you think a woman has neither pride nor passion nor heart for some one to fill? Do you think a woman is too lofty, too coldly pure, or too low, to be above or below temptations. I am young, I am human as yourself, and yet you would deliberately fling me out upon a world of scathing temptations, in the very position of all others most terribly perilous for a young and handsome woman, free yet bound, free to love, not free to wed, utterly unprotected, a wife disowned, yet from whom you dare to claim a wife's faith and fidelity."

"Gabrielle!" the name, was almost whispered, the man still facing her, spell-bound, yet shrinking almost appalled by the scathing passion and terrible truths of this woman as she stood before him, sublime in her noble beauty and fearlessness.

"Ay," she said, still steadily meeting his gaze, "you know well it is true, you are not too lost to feel the force of common justice, and in your turn hear me now answer words you uttered a few minutes ago. You said, as a foregone conclusion (not unnaturally, I allow), that I should scarcely care to live with such a man as I know you to be—but in four words I strike away that conclusion; you are my husband, and I will only yield you the right you claim to a wife's faith in your own hearth, at your own side, under your own protection. Hold!" she raised one hand with a gesture of stern command, "hear me out. You declared that you would not put on your own wild freedom and reckless life the shackles of marriage of an admitted wife under the roof that held you; but I give you my solemn pledge that I will be neither shackle nor hindrance on you. I will ask nothing from you, claim nothing, demand no faith or right of wife save to bear your name. Hate me if you will, I shall give not one look of reproach; I will enter your world, your Bohemia shall be mine, your people my people; all this, and more I can and will do, but I will not be put away from you as you have dared to propose."

He stepped back suddenly, a deadly pallor creeping over his handsome face, and gazing

on her with absolute awe in his eyes, borne down by the moral force against which he had no weapons, though he made an instinctive effort to maintain his position.

"You could not possibly keep to such a bargain," he said hoarsely. "You ask an impossible position."

"I ask nothing, Locksley D'Eyncourt. I simply claim my right to live under your protection, and you dare not refuse me. If I fail in my compact—if I find the position untenable—then I will leave you, and be to you as one dead. Are you answered?"

D'Eyncourt turned from her with a passionate movement, and twice walked the length of the room; he felt that he was driven back, vanquished; that he must yield to a subtle power which he could not analyze or define, though its force was incontrovertible, and swept him before it as the sea sweeps the rudderless vessel.

The third time he stopped before her. Once decided, the man yielded gracefully.

"Well, so be it," he said, stretching out both hands to her, with a slight half laugh, but a flush on his dark cheek. "It is the strangest, wildest compact that ever was made, but it shall have full chance to be tested. Put your little hands in mine, then—my wife."

She gave him one look as she did it—such a look! She had won hardly the first step in the bitter conflict, had defiantly planted her standard on the outworks, and now she was trembling under the recoil of her own dearly-bought victory. Locksley's fingers closed over hers as he felt that she hesitated a second, then stooped suddenly, and kissed the hands he held.

"Let that be the seal, Gabrielle," he said in a low voice, and dropped them. Ah, why, why did he not fold her to his breast and tell her he would try to give his faith and love instead of such a wrong unholy compact? Was he of all men to be the only one insensible to her rare beauty and charms? Why had he hated the marriage, and the innocent child-bride? what, or who stood between him and this girl he had wedded and forsaken? Was it a rival or the intangible rivalry of his reckless wasted life—or both?

CHAPTER III.

A LISTENER.

"Most extraordinary thing, pon my honour," said the Honourable Frederick Davenant, as he lounged with a few other idlers at the railings in the Row, quizzing and gossiping over those who were passing in a constant panorama before them. "Here I came up after ruralising in the innocent country to be startled out of my senses by Ransome."

"Very sorry, but I can't cry," returned Mr. Ransome, lighting a cigar; "you shouldn't be astonished at anything my dear fellow; it's quite too-too you know, out of date." "But to think," pursued Davenant, unabashed, "of that wild scamp D'Eyncourt turning up in the London world again, and—ha, ha—of all things, with a wife? Ransome, you must be mistaken."

"How can I be, when I've been introduced to her?"

"I mean, you duffer, that she isn't a wife at all," returned Davenant.

"Oh, yes, she is, Mr. Fred, safe as the parson ever made, and the most beautiful woman you ever saw—quite Bohemian, too."

"Young?" asked another.

"Lord, yes; only about twenty. I did hear something once about some marriage, five years ago at his father's wish; one, I suppose, of these cool affairs arranged by papas and mammas before their children are born, almost."

"Five years," repeated Fred. "Why, then, she'd be nearly fifteen? Absurd!"

"Fact," added Ransome. "I believe she was with his governor till he died, a little

while ago, and now, I suppose, my lord has been obliged to take her."

"Well, if she's so handsome, it's not a bad bargain," said Davenant; "he'll have to pull in a bit, I expect. Whew! what a lark."

"It doesn't look very like that," said Ransome, "for it was just at Madame Danton's I met her."

"With him, eh?"

"Yes; and she was playing high and flirting as much as he was. Don't think there's much love lost between them," concluded the gentleman.

"Hem! wonder what dashing Clara Pengarth says to her rival," said one of the young men. "I'm jolly sure that Sir Roy had good reason to be so jealous of D'Eyncourt; wonder how she'll meet this new rival."

"Hush," said Ransome, quickly; "here comes Mrs. D'Eyncourt herself."

Splendidly mounted, with graceful Spanish hat and sweeping plume, Locksley's beautiful wife rode by, and at Ransome's low bow wheeled and drew rein by the railings.

"Ah! how do you do, Mr. Ransome," she said, giving him her gauntleted hand; "isn't it a lovely morning?"

"Very. May I present to you my friends Mr. Davenant, Mr. Cletherley Mrs. D'Eyncourt?" Mrs. D'Eyncourt bowed graciously, the men profoundly, with murmurs about great honour. Ransome asked—

"I suppose, Mrs. D'Eyncourt we may count on the happiness of a certainty that you are settled in town for the season."

"Oh yes, I think my husband intends to stay as long as that, but after—" she shrugged her shoulders and laughed.

Just that indefinite touch of something in her graceful manner that was not exactly careless and not exactly fast, and yet had a touch of both.

"He always was a bird of passage you know," said Ransome. "Mrs. D'Eyncourt may I have the honour of taking you to the Opera to-night?" he added eagerly.

"It depends upon what it is—*Dinorah* I think; well, you may, only, if you do you will have to take me after it to Madame Danton's party."

"Will have!" repeated the other reproachfully, "as if it were not the greatest pleasure to be honoured by your commands."

"What a pretty speech."

"Is it? Won't you keep me two dances at least, Mrs. D'Eyncourt, to-night?"

"By my faith you are very impudent, Mr. Ransome!" said Gabrielle laughingly. "I'll see first how you behave beforehand. You may not deserve such a reward, ta-ta."

She gave him her hand, bowed to the others, and rode on.

Then the others exclaimed, not noticing a feminine figure within earshot:—

"Poor Lady Pengarth hasn't a chance now," said Cletherley, "not a chance now, even if he were still free."

"Why not Cletherley?" asked another, "he has all she wants, and she is a rich widow?" Davenant laughed!

"Bah! my lord has, I suspect, weighted his property to a tidy tune for some few years to come, my boy; she is certainly *epuis*, and if he chooses to have her, of course he will: what girl in society could, or would have refused him,—lucky dog!"

"Especially"—added a third, with a sneer and laugh, "when she fully intends to secure him against all rivalry."

"He evidently feels his security too," said Cletherley, "for he didn't seem a bit put out because she has snubbed him several times since she heard of this wife."

"Why should he care?" said the other, "when it's just her saucy coquetry to draw him on. He knows no woman would say 'No' to him. Society, especially feminine society, has bowed to him so much."

"Ay, that's true," said Davenant. "And, of course, he knows his own power, but I can't see that he is the least bit selfish."

"He's deuced self-willed and haughty though,

if he chooses," said Ransome, quickly. "And got a temper if you rouse it; he don't like that will of his crossed, I tell you."

"Not he, by Jove!" exclaimed another, with a laugh. "I think a little contradiction and real rubs would do him good."

"Ah! well," said Ransome, "but after all it's a case of 'England, with all thy faults I love thee still!' He's a jolly fellow, and nothing will ever spoil him out of that."

"But," said another, twisting his fair moustache, "he thinks every girl is in love with him."

"He does nothing of the sort, he's not such an ape, and if he did, by Jove! most of the girls do their best to make him think so—except his wife, of course. He has claims beyond even his beauty. Come, we ought to join the rest, or we shall catch it."

"I wonder if she will come back this way."

The idle group sauntered on unconsciously that every word had been heard by that listener under the trees behind, a handsome woman, perhaps seven or eight-and-twenty, who had with heaving heart and fierce light in her eyes and clenched hands, turned away from the spot.

Was the gossip true, or with some foundation of truth at least? Surely else why such a look in this woman's fair face? why her muttered words as she retreated—

"I will meet her to-night myself, and him—I will know if she is his wife or only passing for it. He must be careless enough of this precious beauty to take her to Mme. Danton's house. I never dared let Roy guess I went there or anywhere else that was a haunt of D'Eyncourt's. But I will go to-night. Thank heaven, I am free of that bondage."

CHAPTER IV.

"AT THE OPERA-HOUSE."

PATTI in *Dinorah*—of course the house was crowded with

"The richest, the rarest,
The freshest, the fairest."

But for all that the little marchioness holds the audience while she is on the stage, and eyes, ears, and tongues are lively enough the moment the act-drop falls; the stalls look up at the boxes, the boxes look down to the stalls, and occupants of the one pass, *pro. tem.*, to the other.

"Do you see that very handsome girl in that box?" said one lady to another in the stalls; "there, in black velvet and silver, with a fair man who is very attentive?"

"Yes! Rather fast-looking to my mind. I wonder who she is?"

"Well, she was on the Row this afternoon. She is a Mrs. Locksley D'Eyncourt, in a terribly fast set, I believe. The new beauty about whom the men are raving."

"Except her husband, of course," sneered the other.

"Oh, that goes without saying. They say he is very handsome, but a terribly wild fellow."

"Oh, quite too utter, you know."

"I have heard that she is nearly as expert at the gaming-table as he is, and plays high too!"

"What a pity! She has just bowed to some one in an opposite box, and indicated him to her companion. I wonder who it is: oh, I see that dark handsome man, who is talking to the two ladies in that box."

Up went her friend's lorgnette.

"Why—yes—it is her husband himself, I verily believe."

"What an awkward rencontre," said the other.

"Oh dear, no; he flirts and so does she—quite right too; the men shouldn't have it all their own way."

"I wonder who is that certainly lovely woman to whom he is just now so attentive."

The very question differently framed put at that moment by beautiful Gabrielle D'Eyncourt to her devoted cavalier.

"Mr. Ransome," she said, in her careless way, "who is that pretty woman into whose box my husband has just come?"

Charles Ransome glanced at her; then across as he said—

"Ah, of course you haven't met her yet, for you are but recently back from a few weeks abroad, and she only came up to town a few days ago. She is Lady Pengarth, the rich widow of the late old Sir Roy Pengarth."

"Old—rich—oh!" said Mrs. D'Eyncourt with a half laugh, "that tells the tale then I suppose."

"Not quite," answered Ransome, covertly watching the beautiful face at his side. "I have heard that some five or six years ago, there was some love affair discovered between her and a very wild dissipated young fellow who, they thought was only either amusing himself, or worse. Old Sir Roy was taken with the portionless fair one, and they married her off to him. He was awfully jealous of her, especially of her old lover, if actual lover (not suitor) he even was; on *dit* that her marriage did not sit very heavily in the way of her amusements."

"I daresay not," said Locksley's wife, leaning back nonchalantly; but she knew well whom Ransome meant, and that he intended her to understand his hint, though whether for any purpose of his own, or to put her on her guard, she could not quite decide yet. He could not guess the heavy heart that beat beneath the rich velvet bodice, while the curved lips smiled so brightly. Not even the faithful Mary knew the secret of her strange love and desperate scheme to win her husband to be her lover.

"Is D'Eyncourt coming to Madame Danton's presently?" asked Ransome, as the act-drop rose again.

"I really can't tell you. I have not seen him since breakfast, except as I do now. Hush!" touching him with her hand, "you are not to talk now."

"Shall I lose my waltzes if I disobey?" whispered Ransome.

"Yes, certainly, and your place in my carriage too. I shall leave after this act if you don't mind."

"I! Dearest Mrs. D'Eyncourt, how could I object to your lightest wish?"

Gabrielle turned towards the stage with an impatient gesture, and presently when the second act was over, rose at once, only paused for her companion to wrap her in the furred mantle, and took his arm to leave the house.

Several others of the best people were also leaving, but Mrs. D'Eyncourt's carriage was found, and Ransome handed her into it. "He'm" muttered the policeman on duty with a grin, "but that ain't Mr. D. with her, never is; he came in with that there fair one. Lord they are a fast lot all of 'em."

You see the gentlemen in blue have their opinions and know sometimes a good deal more about their betters than their betters would care for very often.

As the carriage rolled out of the Haymarket into Charles street *en route* for Madame Danton's, Gabrielle said rather abruptly,

"I suppose you have known my husband for a long time, Mr. Ransome?"

"Oh, yes, for years in and out. Why? fair queen of Bohemia, if I may ask."

"Did you know before then, till lately, that he was married?"

"I knew it, yes, long ago."

"And no one else?" she said quickly.

"Not in our world. There were on *dits* of some odd affair and marriage, but he never owned to it—pardon me—and gossip died for lack of fuel."

"How then did you learn it for a fact?"

"Simply because a lady I knew (since dead) happened to be in that part of the country at the time of your marriage, dear Mrs. D'Eyncourt, and she told me in a letter, having noticed your extreme youth. I chanced across D'Eyncourt shortly afterwards in Baden, and I asked him about it. He ad-

mitted the fact, but begged me to keep it a secret, as it had been arranged that you should separate for a few years, as you were so very young."

"Ah!—yes—exactly!" Gabrielle said, with a deep-drawn breath of relief; "thanks, Mr. Ransome." She leaned back and did not again speak, till, leaning on his arm, they entered Madame Danton's spacious salon. Locksley had not then even actually denied his marriage.

CHAPTER V.

AT MADAME DANTON'S.

THE blaze of light from a hundred chandeliers flung back again and again from sheets of mirror on the walls, the air redolent of perfume of flowers from windows and conservatory, and the flash and gleam of jewels as the brilliant crowd of men and women moved to and fro to the gay strains of the band; but queen among them all moved handsome Locksley D'Eyncourt's beautiful wife. A very mixed crowd, indeed, English and foreign, men and women alike, amongst some of whom it will surely yet be a memory of bitter shame to hear that he ever flung her. But he has claimed indemnity, and so has she—in his world; and he has only himself to blame if, entering later with Lady Pengarth, he feels something strangely like a shock to see the wife he tacitly neglected and tossed to every one's attentions but his own, the centre of a group amongst whom were some of the fastest in town. Perhaps, too, one of them at that moment told her he had come in—not alone—for she looked round towards him and then turned with a half-laugh to Ransome, who just then came up, and taking his offered arm, moved away with him.

"Will you have an ice now? I ought to have come back before," he said, bending down. "You must have thought me a very recreant knight, indeed."

"Oh, no, I did not, I assure you," she said; "in sooth, I never thought about you at all."

Ransome gave her a quick look as if to gauge how far he dared go, for though he had little belief in women, and this one seemed reckless enough, still somehow she puzzled him a good deal.

"Cry *peccavi*—I have sinned, Mrs. D'Eyncourt," he said, "for such a 'long bow' as that."

"What insufferably conceited things men are," said the girl, irresistibly moved to laugh at his impudence; "do you really think it is impossible to forget you for one hour, except, perhaps, on Blaise Pascal's dictum that as nothing is impossible let us believe in the absurd."

"As you will, fairest of ladies; only admit that at least once in that hour you recalled the fact of my existence."

"I will admit nothing of the sort, sir. Get me an ice, and don't talk nonsense."

He laughed, bowed, and said—

"And, by the way, I have of course kept the box seat on my drag for the second turn-out, vacant for your acceptance."

Gabrielle lifted her straight brows with a careless shrug of the shoulders.

"Really, I've so many similar vacancies of that sort, Mr. Ransome, that I think you had better fill up yours. I have half promised Lord Arleigh."

"Well, then, give me the whole promise, Mrs. D'Eyncourt," took up Ransome, coolly; "a half counts for nothing. Your eyes laugh—that means yes, and I am made happy."

Madame Danton—as that lady came up—"Mrs. D'Eyncourt has kindly accepted the box seat on my drag. Of course, I shall count you amongst my fair company."

"Thanks, much," answered the hostess, "I am so glad you are going, my dear Mrs. D'Eyncourt, for there are few can drive such a team as his like Mr. Ransome."

"Madame, you flatter too much. Mrs. D'Eyncourt will think I have bribed you."

"She can judge for herself," returned the lady, moving; "she's too good a rider and whip herself not to be a judge. Ta-ta for the present."

"Ah, here comes your husband this way."

True enough, and on his arm the lady of whom Ransome had spoken. Gabrielle put her own hand lightly on her companion as the couple approached.

"How do, Ransome. Gabrielle, allow me—my wife, Lady Pengarth."

"Who," added Clara Pengarth, as both bowed, "was most anxious to know you personally as well as by sight."

As the two women faced each other a comparison between them was inevitable to mortal eyes, and the younger was so incomparably the most beautiful, with all the nameless grace and charm that was as an invisible halo about her, that Locksley almost started as if under an electric shock as his glance went instinctively from one to the other, and for one second met his wife's eyes. Was it fancy, only fancy, that look of wistful yearning in their depths, which the smile on the lips did not reach as she said,—

"You flatter me, Lady Pengarth. Ah! the band again."

"And my waltz," added Ransome, passing his arm around the slight form.

"I don't think it is. I was going to the card-room. You know I promised Lord Arleigh his revenge to-night."

Familiar the words, and she gazed suddenly on D'Eyncourt, and a strange new pang shot through him, which at the moment he could not analyze or give a name to, save that it was sharp pain, and dim uneasy sense of wrong on his side, coupled with as sharp a pang of jealous anger, as Ransome bore her away. If he were, in truth, the lover of Ransome's story; if this Clara Pengarth had been, directly or indirectly, all or part of the cause of his hatred and practical disowning of his marriage and wife; if she had ever held any sway still up to now, that sway suddenly sank in these few moments, like a house of cards. He left her as soon as he could, and characteristically flung himself more than ever into the gaiety of the scene. He laughed, talked, and dined and flirted; he was more brilliant than ever, and presently made his way to the reckless excitement of the gaming table in the card-room, where his play was always high, at Madame Danton's. Was his wife there, too? Yes, by heaven, and with that confounded Ransome at her side again!

"Well, why not!" came an irrepressible whisper of the still small voice; "through all the tumult of wild passions newly thrust into life; if she plays, *who has taught her*? If she cares for that dissipated companion of your own wild life, who has flung her into a lover's arms? Yourself!" He threw back the accusing whisper fiercely then, as well as he could, and drew near that particular table with a desperate half-formed idea of taking away, out of a scene and people whom to-night it had so suddenly shocked—startled him to see her amongst her.

Gabrielle turned her head as he approached, and the flush deepened in his cheek, the sparkle in the flashing eyes grew brighter, more glittering still.

"Ah! you are just in time Locksley," said she, stretching out carelessly the hand that was not holding her cards. "Give me a few notes, please, or I must really stake this bracelet for my revenge; luck is dead against me to-night; I have lost all I had."

"Fortune is a fickle jade, indeed, to desert beauty," D'Eyncourt answered, laying the notes into that slender hand with a laugh as light, as careless, as his own, and, like his, only a veil to deeper maddened emotions, as she knew by his very voice.

"Thanks! Now gentlemen we can play, please, for my revenge, only we'll change now; this time it shall be *hearts to win*."

"Then it is won already—by the very Queen of Hearts," whispered Ransome, with a glance of bold admiration which startled her

a little, the more that she felt rather than saw—for there was no outward signs save to her vision—his smothered and passionate start. The blood was bounding in her veins; her heart was beating fast as the game went on; but not for that, but for the desperate game of which this was only a type; not for gold, not for painted spots on a painted card did she play, but to win a human heart and a human soul.

She did care this time to win the game—the gamester's eagerness to gain was no acting this time as it went on, for she felt by some subtle instinct that her words, "it is hearts to win," had caught that man's notice—that he stood there watching her hand as intently, though without definite motive or thought, as she did.

A little while more, and the last card was thrown down.

"You have it at last, Mrs. D'Eyncourt!" exclaimed Ransome, giving her the stakes, hearts have won this time. Will you play again, or promenade—

"Neither, I think, Ransome," interposed Locksley, with a haughty flash in his dark eyes as he stepped forward, and lightly dropping his hand on his wife's shoulder as he now added—

"It is past three, and you look tired; come home with me."

For one moment Gabrielle wavered; the bold and perilous game was beginning to work, she said, to one evil or another; it might be against as well as for her hopes—even more likely perhaps the first than the last, for jealousy and passions are dangerous weapons to deal with. Would it be a step too far to deliberately with pretty cynical laugh and jest, shake off his hand and turn to Ransome?

Yes, it would be a false step, and she put her hand on his arm with an indifferent—

"As you will, but I am not tired. Good night, Mr. Ransome. Oh! you must look reproaches at my husband, not me."

"Reproach would be wasted on me," said Locksley, with a short laugh.

Clara Pengarth was near the door.

"Not going?" she said, with a reproachful look of the languishing blue eyes, and she held out her hand. "How can you!"

"He thinks I am tired, Lady Pengarth," said Gabrielle, lightly, "and I suppose it is time to think of leaving."

She bowed, and they passed out to the cloak room, at the door of which Locksley paused to carefully wrap her mantle about her; the early morning air was so chilly for her, he said, as he led her to the carriage.

Ah! poor bleeding, wringing, heart! what would she not have given to lay her aching head on his breast and weep out very tears of blood.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LOCKET.

The drive from Madame Danton's to their own house in Curzon-street was not far, but neither spoke by the way; Locksley sat with folded arms, and frown contracting the handsome hair, and lips and teeth close set. No trace now of the sweetness that lay in the smile of that miniature which nestled in her bosom—always there like a charm.

Gabrielle, colourless enough now, weary, and sick at heart with the miserable rôle she was acting out, felt that his silence would not last, that he did not mean it to last, and she was not mistaken; though, as is often the case, when we set a heavy stone rolling it goes faster than we quite intended.

She had meant to rouse both his fears and jealousy as a husband simply, but ignorant—he scarce knew it yet himself—that any deeper, better, warmer feeling had been stirred. She was not fully prepared for the length to which she was driven by the mere chance of his following her to her drawing-room quicker than she had expected.

Gabrielle never allowed Mary to sit up for her; she could undress herself, she said; and now she removed the glittering jewels from her ears, her throat, her arms, and laid them in their case on the toilette-table.

The precious miniature rested at night in a secret drawer in this table, and she drew it forth to pause and gaze into the loved face through blinding tears to-night, was only natural; and so intent were her thoughts on its original that she heard neither step without, nor light tap at the inner door leading to the bed-chamber behind her. The closing of that door and glimpse of her husband's tall figure in the immense mirror before her made her start violently, and instantly thrust the locket back into its hiding-place, but not before Locksley's quick eye had, also in the tell-tale glass, seen both start and locket and action.

To spring to her side and grasp her wrist with such fierce wrath as would have terrified many a woman was the impulse and movement of a second.

"Death, girl! what is that you have hidden from me in your breast? Give it me!"

Startled, deadly pale and trembling, she yet did not lose control, but stepped haughtily back, putting her free hand on her breast.

"Loose my hand, Locksley! What do you mean by such language to me?"

"I will tell you what I mean directly. Give me that locket, for, by Heaven, I will have it."

"Not unless you use force to take it from me," she answered, with proudly undaunted front; and she had never looked more beautiful than now. "And you will scarcely so forget your manhood as to use your strength against a girl who cannot resist you."

She flung her hand away, baffled and ashamed of his violence, but with passion and determination intermixed.

"That is the way you women always think to beat a man back; you madden him beyond all bounds, and then fall back on your physical weakness. I find you gazing on the likeness of a man—I could just see, it was that in the glass—you start, tremble, hide and refuse to show it or explain it to me—your husband—"

"Hold you there, Locksley!" interrupted Gabrielle, "you are claiming rights which you abjured, remember, when you made that compact which this night you have already broken through and are breaking now, though I have kept mine to the letter—and you have certainly kept your threat or vow to test my power of keeping the bargain. You have your full freedom; you have no right to coerce mine, so that I keep your name unstained."

"I care nothing for compacts now," he answered, coming up to her again with a passionate gesture. "You have flirited and allowed that Ransome to go so far that by Heaven he dared to-night to give you his insolent looks, and almost make love to you before my very face! and then I find you with that hidden locket. Will you dare tell me that is not a lover's likeness, declared or understood? not, at least," he said, hoarsely, "the likeness of one you love."

Ah! me! too bitterly as she deemed, could she answer no to the first, too bitterly Yes to the second; it stabbed her so suddenly, so sharply, that it broke her guard down for a minute, and she turned aside covering her face with tears—a deep irrepressible sob—

"Heaven help me!—yes—the last!"

There was a moment's dead silence, in which that man held his very breath. As the roar of artillery will for the time lull the fury of the elements, so the storm of his wild passions was checked and stunned by an answer that came like a heavy blow—so crushing, so terrible; because in that moment it woke him at once to the miserable knowledge that insensibly she had undermined all his prejudice and dislike, and yet that that knowledge came too late he had flung the fruit to others, and now that another had gathered it—his fruit—his by all right—he found its value. His own companion too.

"Is it—is it Charles Ransome?" he said at last, so hoarsely that it scarcely seemed the same voice.

No answer, no movement, but she felt that he had put the weapon into her hands and her very heart gave a wild bound of hope. He did care then, and if he still thought her heart shut to him given to a rival, he would passionately try to win her from that rival—to pit himself against him. If she were to admit the truth now she felt equally that her hopes would be lost—for in itself her hold was too slight. His was a nature that would not value ripe fruit flung at his feet. He had deserted, neglected her, shut his eyes determinately to her rare beauty and charm, because she was his wife, the bride of a forced marriage, but when any one admired and courted her, it roused the very jealousy of possession which he had disowned, the right of husband which he had ignored in an iniquitous compact that could not last, if only it was because it was against nature—certainly against such as his to have such a beautiful being with him, his own by all right, and remain so indifferent to her. Nor had he cared while he thought she was as indifferent to others as to himself; but the suspicion, still more the certainty, it seemed, that another man was more to her than he was fired his very breast.

"Answer me," he repeated, fiercely. "Is it Ransome?"

Then his wife dropped her hands and faced him again.

"For pity's sake don't ask me, for my honour's sake and yours say no word to him; for I give you my solemn oath that he has never uttered one word to me that I could not repeat to you, my husband."

"Can you dare say that, Gabrielle?"

He put both hands on her shoulders, looking into her very eyes, but hers never flinched as she said,—

"I can."

"Then—I will hold my peace—for the present."

He dropped his hands, turned away and left the room, left her the conqueror, more than she knew then.

CHAPTER VII.

"HEARTS TO WIN."

DAYS and even weeks went by outwardly much the same as before, but Locksley D'Eyncourt kept his promise about Ransome; and if he was cold and haughty when they met, it came not unnaturally from the husband to a man who made little secret of his admiration for the beautiful wife. Presently, too, there were on *dits* at the club that rascally Locksley D'Eyncourt had certainly quarrelled with saucy Mademoiselle Fay, the danseuse, and was not so much at the Raleigh as heretofore, or at Dancre's famous gambling house. Then Madame Danton declared he and Madame had too much deserted her salons, and the women said that he was a good deal more with Mrs. D'Eyncourt than when the season began, they were sure. Oh, yes, she was on Ransome's drag at the coaching turn-out, but she was on her husband's at that of the four-in-hand. She certainly was fast, and perhaps Mr. D'Eyncourt didn't in truth quite see it. As to Lady Pengarth, it was clear that Mrs. D'Eyncourt had cut her out, even with her husband. Rallied on his complete desertion of play, Locksley only laughed, said he was getting sick of it certainly, and turned it off.

But only the eyes of the woman who loved him saw the real change in him; saw the suffering of that wild passionate heart that was so desperately, so determinately setting itself to win her from his fancied rival, and how hard it was to resist the impulse of his heart and end his misery. It told on him, for he began to look weary, and even haggard.

One Sunday evening several people had as usual dropped in, but left fairly early, when D'Eyncourt, who had gone a little way with

the last, Lord Arleigh, to smoke a cigar, came back; his young wife was sitting on the couch, her book dropped, her hands lying on her lap, her whole attitude drooping. The fierce thought uprose, "she is thinking of that man;" but aloud he said—

"Are you tired, Gabrielle?"

"A little," she said, wearily.

Locksley took two or three turns of the room, then stopped abruptly before her.

"We cannot go on like this, Gabrielle."

She looked up in the handsome face, her own flushing, then growing very pale.

"What do you mean, Locksley?"

"I cannot bear this misery longer?" he said passionately. "I never knew till that horrible night at Danton's how terribly you had kept your compact and given your heart to another. I never knew till then that I, your husband, had learned to care for the possession of that heart. I have tried so hard to win it, to win you, and you will not—will not make no sign to give my darkness one ray of hope or light. Can I never win your love for mine, Gabrielle—never?"

She half put out her hand, then drew back. "Is it only that?" she said, slowly; "is all you have done since that night enough, think you, for a woman's soul to set against all the cruel wrong that went before? Suppose for one moment that I had loved you all that time, think what I must have suffered—almost hated for no fault of my own; enslaved, flung in very resentment and neglect amongst men and women that few would choose to be about a young wife—you even introduced to me a lady whose name you knew I must have heard coupled with your own. Do you think if I had cared for you what I must have felt then, if only because I was your wife, whether rumour was true or false?"

"Yes, heap my head with deepest reproaches. I deserve a thousand more, for I am a villain utterly unworthy of you. I have treated you with such errands that if you wish to leave me for ever I dare not say one word, but—but—if you lo—" he broke suddenly down, and flung himself at her feet with a passionate burst of grief that was terrible to witness. "Oh, Heaven! I cannot lose you quite! Will no repentance, no suffering atone, no love win yours, my life, my wife? Can I win your heart now?"

She bent forward, faltered—

"No, no, not—not now. Husband, I have loved only you all my life."

"Gabrielle!"

The man sprang to his feet as if a shot had struck him. One look at the beautiful face, and he had locked her in his arms, weeping almost convulsively on his breast—where only they should fall.

"Loved me all your life?" he said, at last, pressing his lips passionately to hers. "One I loved could gain my heart."

She lifted her face for a moment, sinking through the tears, now, and answered, softly, "I cherished your memory as a child, and when I saw you on our marriage day I thought you could not be all bad as they said when your father gave me your miniature."

"Mine! mine! and it was that then which—Oh, Gabrielle, darling wife, what a wretch I have been."

"Hush! I used to look at the miniature, and recall your face at its best, my husband. I knew myself, knew that one day I might love, and that if you did not hold my heart, and another came, I, wife and yet no wife, should forget all in my craving for love, I must win all, or lose all; and when you came I said that you could only be won to me and from your reckless life by your own weapons. It was a terrible game to play out, and harder still to be cold and indifferent, to see you suffer at the belief that I loved Ransome! Do you remember that game of cards, Locksley?"

"Do I not, my darling, my own loved wife?" and D'Eyncourt folded her closer still to his breast. You knew your power, it has come true—Hearts to Win."

[THE END.]

DREGS AND FROTH.

A STORY OF TO-DAY.

CHAPTER XIII.

"We were landed at Gravesend, and I had to tramp it to London. My clothes were so old that before I got to Greenwich I was glad to exchange them with a scarecrow. I had a rest in the Park, and there I met a swell cove I knew in Melbourne when he was as hard up as I was. Lord love him! he gave me a sov. I did stare, and no mistake. Hadn't seen such a thing for years."

With these words, a little thin old man, with a weather-beaten face and a rubicund nose, finished his story of some recent wanderings in Australia for the benefit of a group of theatrical supernumeraries, in that long dressing-room under the stage of a London theatre, to which the reader has been already introduced.

Dick Benny, in tights and doublet, with his feathered cap thrust to the back of his head, stands amongst the listeners, a star of spangles and foil-paper gleaming on his noble breast, his dirty fingers thrust into his sword-belt, and the weapon it supports between his legs.

The play of "Romeo and Juliet" is still on the bills, and he is still a noble of the house of Montague.

So is the man from Australia, who is nursing one of his russet shoes with one hand, and gently tapping its sole with the other.

"I've got a sister and two brothers in Australrely myself," says Benny, "and only the other day, my father, as keeps a little shop down there by the Monument, told me as there's someone now at the 'Ship,' in Greenwich, who'll pay my passage out any day I likes."

"Well, it didn't do much for me," says the super from Australia. "There's nothing but hard work does do much out there, and hard work, you see, was never much in my line; didn't agree with my health. I was an artist—used to take portraits with black paper and a pair of scissors. Where are your brothers?"

"They've got a farm at a place near Queensland."

"What name?"

"Benny."

"And your father has a shop near the Monument, has he?"

"Yes."

"I wonder if it's the same Benny a little lad from Cornwall went to as errand boy ever so many years ago; his shop was close by the Monument."

"What was the boy's name—Jack?"

"Yes; Jack Jenkins."

Dick shook his head.

"The boy I means was Jack Weeldon. Black Jackey, we called him."

The man from Australia laughed heartily.

"Weeldon!" he exclaimed. "Why, that's my name. And he was black enough, too—black hair, black eyes, and a dark complexion. I remember him quite well; my memory was always good. It's a long time ago, a matter of some thirty years, perhaps, and he was but a little chap; yet if I met him to-morrow I should know him again directly; I'm sure I should. The impudent little beggar, to take my name!"

"Don't think you would know him, though," says Dick, with a grin. "What do you think he is?"

"He was a sharp lad. I always said he'd get on. Got a shop of his own, perhaps."

"Shop!" said Benny, scornfully. "Why, he's an alderman, a sheriff, a knight, and a Member of Parliament, one of the richest men in the City of London."

The old man opened both mouth and eyes at this, put down his russet-clad foot, and, resting both hands on both knees, gazed into Dick's face.

"What!" he at last exclaimed.

Dick repeated the wondrous list of Sir John Weeldon's honours, and the man from Australia

gave vent to his astonishment in a long, low tremulous whistle.

"Nonsense!" said he.

"It's true," said Dick.

"Why," said he, "many a night I've been out with his father pilchard fishing."

"What did you say his real name was—Jenkins?" asked Dick.

"Yes. I knew both his father and mother—as honest, hardworking, and pious an old couple as ever made a meal off potato pasty and a drink of sour cider."

"I've got a sister in Cornwall, and she's married a man named Jenkins!" Dick says, wonderingly; and then adds, with an oath and a laugh: "What a lark if Polly's married into the alderman's family, and I'm one of his relatives! I'll ask her about it when I write."

"I knew Cornwall very well once," said the old man. "Used to travel cutting out portraits all through England in those days. I was never in one place much longer than I was in Cornwall."

At this moment "the dresser" appeared with his box of powdered vermillion and his hare's foot, and at his bustling approach and hurried cry of "Now, then, look alive here!" every super turned one cheek to him, and then the other, that each might receive a dab and a rub from the reddened foot.

Then others break into the conversation, and the man from Australia's talk is about kangarooing, cattle herding, digging, clearing, about wooden pears and cherries with their stones growing outside, of flying apossams, &c., &c., until the curtain is rung up and they all crowd out of the room up the narrow stairs on to the stage.

On the strength of their mutual acquaintance with Sir John Weeldon, Dick and the man from Australia spent the evening together, and had in consequence to go begging for a breakfast apiece in the morning—Benny, as usual, going to his father's table: old Weeldon failing, and coming hungry to the theatre in the evening.

CHAPTER XIV.

MR. JAMES GRANT has now brought to a close certain business transactions which had occupied most of his time since his return to England. Not one of those creditors who had driven him from his beloved wife and children, his home, country and relatives, remained unpaid, or had not received both debt and interest.

But that great atonement for his enforced desertion of those who were nearest and dearest to him, his wife and daughters, that which had been the most cherished dream of the bitter past, remained a dream. No clue to their whereabouts had been discovered. All the sweet hopes and plans he had so enthusiastically conceived in the early days of his adversity, and clung to so persistently in the long and desperate struggles that succeeded them, were now, when they should be so joyously and triumphantly realized, cruelly frustrated.

It was as if all the glory and sunshine of his prosperity, the wealth he had so rapidly accumulated, the society which beckoned him within its portals, the numerous friends he was fast recovering and acquiring, had come to him as summer comes after a long and terrible winter to some poor prisoner who sees it through iron bars.

Haunted by a melancholy sense of loneliness and desertion, he turned his thoughts to his brother and sisters. They were not kind to him in his trouble, and when disaster and ruin overwhelmed him, they had only added to his pangs by their reproaches. But his heart yearned for them. He had sought them with anxious care, and, failing to find them, had inserted in every newspaper throughout the country the following advertisement:

"Mr. James Ronald Grant, son of the late Dr. Joseph Grant, of Ipswich, has returned to England. Letters may be addressed to him at the 'Ship,' Greenwich, Kent."

The first result of this announcement was a letter from the north. It ran as follows:

"HALCOMBE VICARAGE, NEAR BANBURY,
"Thursday Evening.

"DEAR JAMES,—Although we can have but little sympathy with one who deserted his wife and children in such a cowardly way, we are not inclined to ignore altogether the tender claims of nature and relationship. We are none of us rich, but if you are in distress and require any small sum for present necessities, you may write to us at the above address. With the deepest sorrow and regret, it is my duty to inform you that our dear parents are no more. Your good father died on the 17th of last January, and our poor mother departed this life for a better and happier on the 14th ultimo. They both spoke of you just before they died. God's holy will be done! Your affectionate brother,

"MALCOLM B. GRANT."

Beginning to read with a flush of anger and a kindling eye, Mr. Grant put this letter aside mournfully and with tears.

"Hard and cold and rigidly virtuous as ever," he said, with a heavy sigh, before he took it up again, carefully refolded and placed it within his capacious pocket-book.

Then he walked out into the air and made his way to the Park, which at that early hour would, he knew, be quite lonely and deserted.

Pacing up and down the glorious old avenue of chestnuts and elms which John Evelyn ("that model of a meritorious English gentleman") planted, he recalled, not the father and mother who had taunted him so harshly with the misfortunes of his manhood, and so obstinately refused to hear his explanations, but the soft and tender mother of his infancy and childhood, the kind and indulgent father of his boyhood.

"Ah! how good they were to me when I was a lad!" he murmured, piteously; and, cleaving only to that, sentenced to the grave of eternal forgetfulness all less generous memories and emotions. He promised himself, "I will never, never think of them again except as they were then—gentle, kind, just and true."

Presently he sat down to rest on the brow of the hill under a gnarled and knotted tree, which had braved the storms and basked in the sunshine of a hundred years, or probably many more. From there he gazed, dreamily and sadly, over the tree-tops, down on the domes and colonnades of stately buildings that have given Greenwich fame, and over dingy house-roofs to where the Thames gleamed through the haze until lost in the smoke-blackened mist beyond the docks and their forests of masts where mighty London stands.

Thoughts full of awe and wondering held him in their thrall; scenes of the busy lives which had ended in that perfect rest of an endless night passed before him; "father," "mother," were the words formed every now and then in the motion of his silent lips.

This long, mournful reverie was broken by merry noises. The sun was shining brilliantly, and he heard the chatter and laughter of children sent into the park with their nursemaids for a run before breakfast.

Resuming his walk he passed out of the gates into the breezy slopes of Blackheath, which he crossed in the direction of Greenwich. There he spied, striding rapidly towards him from the Blackheath Railway-station, the stalwart form of Mr. Richards, the private detective.

"Ah, Richards! good morning. You're out early."

"Good mornin', sir; glad to meet you; came purposely."

"Any news?"

"Well, yes, sir; something has turned up, and very strangely, too."

"What is it?"

"You remember, perhaps, sir, that I mentioned to you a friend I've got in the same line as myself? We co-operate."

"I remember. Well?"

"He is working for someone in Cornwall

who is looking for a young lady named Clara Grant; and Clara, I think, was the name of one of your daughters."

"Yes, yes; go on!"

But instead of obeying his impatient employer, Mr. Richards stopped altogether, and taking a note-book from his pocket, began very deliberately turning over its leaves.

"Ah!" said he, at last, in a tone of satisfaction. "All right, here they are."

Then he consulted his written notes silently, and at last read from them aloud:

"Name of party inquiring, Dr. Carew. Name of party wanted, Clara Grant!"

Mr. Grant started and listened anxiously.

Mr. Richards, with his thumb in his closed note-book, pauses to ask:

"Do you know the name of Carew?"

"No."

"Um! Thought you might."

Then he began to read again:

"Clara Grant, supposed to be in great poverty and distress, was last seen singing in the streets of London!"

He was stopped by a cry of pain, and looked up to see his employer with upraised, half-clutched hands, and a face which had suddenly grown white with terror.

"Great Heaven, what's the matter?"

"Clara—my Clara—my—my pretty—little Clara—in—in—the street! No, no, no!—impossible!"

"Here's a seat here, sir; we had better sit down."

Richards eyed his employer apprehensively as he suffered himself to be placed on the wooden bench, looking wildly into the air with strangely fixed eyes that seemed smitten with sudden blindness.

Recovering himself partially, Mr. Grant muttered:

"Go on, Mr. Richards, go on!"

After a pause full of doubt, the detective reluctantly re-opened his note-book.

"Name of another party inquiring, Alderman Sir John Weeldon, M.P. Party inquired after, his wife Alice. Maiden name, Grant; mother's maiden name, Cochrane; came from a place near Ipswich, in Suffolk."

Arousing himself with an effort to listen more intently and understand more clearly, Mr. Grant places his hand upon the arm of Richards and cries loudly:

"Stop!"

Then, after a pause, he adds in a lower tone:

"His wife—Alice!—my daughter Alice! Yes, yes, go on!"

Mr. Richards, again consulting the note-book, reads:

"Is most likely with a sister named Clara."

Mr. Grant, with his hand at his own throat, whispers to himself:

"Alice—Clara—and their mother. Why are they not with their mother?"

Mr. Richards, ignoring the question he can hardly be expected to answer, goes on:

"She ran away from her husband on the seventeenth of February last, and is supposed to be concealed by some person in Cornwall. Husband intends to sue for a divorce."

"Enough! enough! Give me your arm, Richards; you shall tell me the rest at—the 'Ship.'"

"Lord, sir, how you tremble."

The old man groans, and squeezes Mr. Richards's arm with such force that he cries out with the pain. He then relaxes his grip, but utters no apology, walks on tremblingly and with uncertain steps, as if he were asleep, but moans now and then, as if suffering, and then mutters:—

"Their mother—my wife—their mother, where is she?"

He leaves the detective alone when they reach the hotel, and Mr. Richards enjoys heartily the breakfast prepared for his employer.

An hour after, the wealthy man from Australia returns, very pale and sad-looking, but calm. Sitting down by the open window, he quietly says:—

"I hope you have made yourself comfortable, Richards. It's your own fault if you have not."

"Pretty well, sir; I'd got a splendid appetite," says Richards, smiling.

"And now for the rest of your notes, if you have more."

"Yes, sir, there's another thing or two. Yesterday afternoon there came to me a handsome young swell with a military, aristocratic cut about him—gave no name, but promised a ten-pound note for information about a young woman named Clara Grant. It's the same young woman as the people in Cornwall want. I know that, because he last saw her singing in the streets in Camden Town."

Mr. Grant winced as if he had received a blow.

"The young military gent knew that Clara Grant and Mrs. Weeldon were sisters, although he said nothing about it to me until I told him that I knew they were."

"Stop!" said Mr. Grant; advancing to a side table on which were writing materials, and taking up a pen, he said slowly:

"Alice is the wife of Sir John Weeldon, an alderman of the City of London, and a member of Parliament. Is that so, Richards?"

"Yes, sir."

"She is the daughter of a Mr. Grant, and her mother's maiden name was Cochrane?"

"Exactly so, sir."

"And on the 17th of February last she ran away from her husband?"

"So he says."

"Have you gleaned anything about the cause of her flight?"

"I've got a man hanging about the alderman's house to get something out of the servants."

"Yes, and what reason is there for supposing that she is in Cornwall? You did tell me, but I—I forget."

"Very good reason, sir. Sir John Weeldon advertised, warning his wife, as 'A. W.' that he intended to obtain a divorce unless she returned to him. Dr. Carew replied in another advertisement, asking for the advertiser's address. This led to a correspondence, and that led to this discovery. A lady, in every point answering to the description of Mrs. Weeldon, but calling herself Mrs. Cochrane, had taken the post of companion to a Miss Tregarthen, of Tregarthen Manor House, near Hellaz, in Cornwall. The family doctor's name there is Carew. He suspected that there was something wrong about Mrs. Cochrane, because the laundry-maid at the Manor House had told him that all the companion's under-linen was marked, not 'A.C.', but 'A.W.' Don't you see, sir? Mrs. Weeldon's initials!"

Mr. Grant nodded, and, raising his hand, said:

"Wait a minute."

He then wrote on the paper before him:

"Tregarthen Manor House, near Hellaz, Cornwall."

"And now," said he, "give me the address of Alderman Weeldon."

The detective obeyed, and that also was written down.

Mr. Grant turned to listen once more, and the detective resumed:

"Sir John goes down to Cornwall himself, and when he gets there he finds the bird flown. The doctor had altered his mind and was insolent. Miss Tregarthen was full of coarse abuse and very insulting, so he comes back full of rage and mortification, firm in the belief that they are hiding his wife away from him."

"There's something curious here—I can't understand it—whom did you hear it from?"

"My secret partner, in the detective business, and he had it from the alderman himself."

"Very well. It is clear that we have at last some clues for the discovery of my daughter Alice. She has run away from her husband, Sir John Weeldon, and is in hiding, most likely in Cornwall. Well? I shall have an interview with Sir John to-day, and then I shall see her

in Cornwall. And now for Clara—how do the clues rest there?"

"Well, sir," said the detective, running his eye over his notes, "This is how that stands. Dr. Carew, acting most likely for Mrs. Weeldon, says that she was last seen in the streets, near Primrose Hill, singing. The young military gent, name unknown, says his Clara Grant was last seen in the same way in Camden Town. I tell him at a guess that the young woman he wants is Mrs. Weeldon's sister, and he admits that she is; so I think that's clear."

"Yes—and now—my wife?"

Mr. Richards shakes his head despondingly. "We shall hear of her when we find the other two, I suppose, and not, I'm afraid, before."

"Then let us work at once. I'll be back with you directly, Richards, and we'll go to town together."

With these words Mr. Grant sprang to his feet. He seemed to have shaken off all his melancholy depression. There was a stern determined knit of his brows, as he crossed the room to the door with a sure, firm, certain tread.

"He means business now, and no mistake," said the detective to himself.

CHAPTER XV.

THE FISHERMAN'S COTTAGE.

Like one that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread.

WORDSWORTH.

There is something of a pride to see a fellow lie at our feet that has triumphed over so many.

G. FARQUHAR.

Leaving Mr. Grant on his way to visit Sir John Weeldon, and find that he was from home, and would not return for some days—"perhaps a week or more"—as the footman said—we follow in the alderman's footsteps, and hurry back to Cornwall.

The heavy rain is pelting down with inexhaustible vigour, and the wind is making wild and mournful noises in the air. The little sheds and cottages which occupy a rocky shelf under that mighty cliff where old Bess Jenkins and her husband live are soaked and dripping. The moaning melancholy sea is a dull expanse of grey, on which the boats look spectral, and the sullen sky above is not a bit more cheerful.

The little kitchen which serves the homely old couple as a sitting-room has a very primitive aspect, with its bare beams and slate floor, but it is marvellously clean, snug, and cozy. A large rudely made deal table, and a dresser scrubbed into whiteness, some heavy oaken stools, and two wicker-work chairs cushioned furnish the apartment, the latter being luxurious additions of recent acquirement, which are used with a sense of humiliation as admitting the weaknesses and infirmities of age. "Stools with backs to 'un" have always been, in the opinion of hardy Jack Jenkins, enervating and demoralizing, and it was with considerable reluctance that he allowed Owen to provide such comfortable luxuries for his and the old woman's use.

In one of these chairs Mrs. Weeldon now sits, for it has been determined that the hiding place which is at once most secure and appropriate and least likely to be visited by the alderman is—his parent's cottage.

She has been the fisherman's guest for some days, and has already heard more than once or twice the old, old, oft-repeated story of little Jack's flight from home, when he went away in the darkness to seek his fortune in the "big charch town."

"A brave lad wi never a fear in un," said she, with sorrowful tenderness. "I'll never rest if my grave if I dies afore I sees my Jacky agen."

"You have firm faith in seeing him again, Mrs. Jenkins."

"The Lord ha' laid it on my mind an' I cannot shake it off un," says the mother, piously.

Ah! how strongly this old fish-wife recalls her husband to Mrs. Weeldon's mind, now, when she looks at her out of his eyes, speaks to her in a half masculine voice having the exact cadence of Sir John's voice, stands before her, arms akimbo, with his broad chest and large head, tall, square, and erect in a vigorous old age, her every look and action suggestive of the form and carriage, looks and actions of her graceless son, Sir John.

And of this woman, so tenderly true and faithful in her mother's love through all the trials of desertion and neglect, he is ashamed!

"But you have another son," says Mrs. Weeldon.

"Aw-loar yes, my dearie, Heaven be thankit, an' a right good son he be sure-ly, a strappin' lad is our Owen, wi limbs like my old un's, long an stronger, but you've seen un likely?"

Mrs. Weeldon had not seen him.

"Aw, my dear, but he's worth the lookin' at's Owen, straight an' tall an' strong, allus at work, he's a good un!—so's un's wife and babies too for that matter. Polly's a rare pretty un, an' as good a wife as ever stepped in shoe leather, aw; 'twere a lucky meeting wi her I can tell yer. Maybe you'll see un all afore you go, my dearie."

So she bustled about preparing the noontide meal, with its inevitable dish of hot tea, and soon after her cheery old man comes home, dashing the wet off his venerable son-wester at the door, stamping it from the loose wrinkles of his long sea-going boots, rubbing it from his beard with his big blue cotton handkerchief, and laughing as he casts aside his gleaming old waterproof, preparing for the meal before him as cheerfully as if wet and windy weather were rather good things than otherwise.

"Well, missus, an' how are yer ter day?"

Mrs. Weeldon says smilingly she is no worse, and Mr. Jenkins proceeds to narrate his morning's experience with "t' lads" in the boat of which he is part proprietor.

The dreary day was fast closing in with an evening as gloomy when the sounds of a horse and cart jolting along the muddy road above came to their ears and suddenly ceased. A moment after there were steps on the little garden path, the latch was raised, and the door opened, revealing Owen Jenkins, who received the heartiest welcoming in hugs and kisses, hand-wringing and joyous laughter.

When he had been introduced to Mrs. Cochrane, and had his old place at the dinner table—the place he always had when a boy at home—he looked grave and said,—

"Mother, I've got for you such a piece o' news as you never had in all your life afore."

"Be't good news, Owen?"

Owen looked a little puzzled, as he answered, "Well, may be 'tis, and may be 'tisn't, 'tis about Jacky."

How the poor old mother's heart leaped at the name was seen in the sudden pressure of her brown hand upon her breast, in the raising of her thick grey brows, and the eager opening of her eyes, in her passionate exclamation, "at last! at last!"

"Polly's got un a letter from her brother Dick, the playactor."

"Aw?"

"And in't he says as there be a man play-acting wi him up there in the great town or the name of Weeldon, which is the very same man as you knowed afore ever I wer born."

"Aw! aw! an' un knows wer Jacky be?"

Owen nodded, repeating her eager words, but far more slowly, "un knows wer Jacky be." Then he paused, and with a keen inquiring glance into his mother's face, added, "He be in London, mother, a rich man, a alderman, a sheriff, a member o' pairlymen, a knight, a son," he said slowly in conclusion, raising his voice and hand, and changing the tone to one of suppressed indignation, "who for nigh upon forty year, an' odd never cared to know whether the father as worked so hard for un, an' the mother as loved un, wer alive or dead, in health or sickness, in care, an poverty or in the workhouse."

Owen's voice was husky with passionate

emotion, as he uttered the last words, and rising went to the window, looking out into the deepening gloom to hide his emotion and unbidden tears that were in his eyes.

The presence of Mrs. Weeldon, watching them with emotion almost as great as their own, was forgotten in the prevalent excitement. The old man arose, and going to his son laid his big hand heavily on the young man's shoulder, saying in a low tremulous voice, "I would rather ha' heard that he wer long since dead, Owen. I'm 'shamed o' un!"

Then a deep silence fell upon the group, broken presently by the sobbing and crying of Mrs. Jenkins.

"I dunna see—I dunna see as yer need say—say that—that nay—naythir, Jack," she sobbed. "I dunna see why yer should be—should be shamed—shamed on un nay—naythir. He were a bright—a bright lad an' he's—he's a bright—bright man, an'," she added, striking the table vehemently with her clenched fist, "an' I'll see un agen ef I walks every step o' th' way!"

Again the image of Sir John is before Mrs. Weeldon—so strongly did his passionate restlessness of purpose flash out in the mother's last words.

Conflicting emotions were struggling in either breast. Astonishment, affection, pride, and indignation, mingled with pain and gladness, and, in the bosom of the runaway wife, sympathy and fear.

That her lost son, whom everybody had said was long ago dead, should be alive was a mighty joy and triumph to the heart of a mother who had always believed in his existence, and had nursed his memory with such tender love and patience. That the son should display such monstrous selfishness, ingratitude, and unnatural hardness of heart was terrible indeed. That honour and wealth beyond the wildest dreams of her imagination should have been won by her own poor little friendless, solitary lad, who had begun his life alone and penniless in a great crowded city, astounded her, and she shared in its glory with all her mother's pride; but why in the midst of his victory and power had he so thoroughly forgotten them?

"An' that's not the worst," said Owen. "The man's not only 'shamed of the mother as bore him—he's changed his name."

"I'm glad on 't," said the old man, fiercely.

"He calls unself Sir John Weeldon."

"An' Weeldon be it to the very end on't, for an' he were the king o' all England I would be proud to say as I say now, lad, wi' all my heart let un never be called no son o' mine agen—I disown un—never mention his name under my roof agen—he is not un son, my dearie, and our name's the better worth our havin', Owen, now than 'twould be if 't were worn by such a thing as that—wi' all his grand titles o' alderman, an' sheriff, an' member o' parliamen, an' all the rest on it! Come along, old woman, let us finish our dinner, here's Mrs. Cochrane wonderin' what's come to us all—aint yer, mum? Don't mind un, dearie—my wife thought she had another son, yer see, an' we thought she hadn't, that's all, and now we knows and she knows she hasn't, ha! ha! That be all. Come, Owen, lad, we shall ha' the good strong tea all cold. Now missus, wipe your eyes and look alive wi' the fish there."

"Aw loar! Aw loar!" moaned Mrs. Jenkins in her wicker chair, and Owen putting down the thin-brown hands, in which she had concealed her face, hid it again upon his bosom, and kissing the grey hairs, said:—

"Father's right, mother, an' that's the way you'll look at un by-an'-by, [by-an'-by, my dearie.]

(To be continued.)

THE SLAVE MARKET IN TURKEY is by no means a thing of the past. Only a week or two ago a girl was publicly sold as a slave by an old Turkish woman in the court of one of the most frequented Galata mosques. One person protested against the proceedings.

THE STORY OF ALCOHOL.

THE first man to produce alcohol by mechanical appliance was an Arab—son of a strange, soothsaying woman named Hagar, who lived somewhere about a thousand years ago. Before that time old wine had been made very strong; but, so far as we can learn, distilled spirits had not been known. There is reason to believe, however, that the barbarians of the north of Europe had contrived to obtain a very strong liquor by the process of *freezing*, long before distillation was known. By accident a man discovered that the liquor drawn from a mass of frozen wine was much stronger than the original wine. A cask of wine, exposed to a temperature far below zero, had frozen, apparently, solid; but he broke the mass by vigorously punching and stirring, and was enabled to draw off a goodly quantity of beautiful wine—strong and smooth, and wondrously exhilarating. And so he continued to stir the icy mass, and draw off the wine until no more would run. Finally, when the weather became warm enough to thaw the ice that had been left in the cask, lo and behold! only a weak, almost tasteless water was found to have been left behind. So he had discovered a way in which to extract the alcoholic property of his wine.

From Arabia the secret of distillation went to Venice, and thence to all parts of the enlightened world. In the sixteenth century distilled spirits had come into use throughout Europe. The first account we have of its being used as a beverage was by the labourers in the Hungarian mines, in the fifteenth century. Until the sixteenth century, as a general thing, it was in use among the people only as a medicine, and was kept by the apothecaries. The wine-sellers and keepers of *cafés* had nothing to do with it. As late as 1751 it was used (we speak of strong distilled spirits) in the English army only as a cordial.

During the first of the Tudors (Henry VII.) distilled spirit was not known in Ireland. When, however, it had been introduced upon the Green Island its alarming effects became so quickly apparent that Government made laws prohibiting its manufacture. They could shut out foreign spirits.

In the sixteenth century it was introduced into the American Colonies. Its story there is very well known. What a thing it was to put into the hands of the Indians! As late as the last century, and even into the beginning of the present, it was given out to the soldiers and sailors of our Christian armies and navies, under the firm belief that it was a preventive of sickness, and that it made men bold and courageous on the field of battle. Such is the story of the introduction of alcohol—of distilled spirits—into the world.

MARRIAGE.—Marriage is, of all earthly unions, almost the only one permitting no change but that of death. It is that engagement in which man exerts his most awful and solemn power—the power of responsibility which belongs to him as one that shall give account, the power of abnegating the right to change—the power of parting with his freedom—the power of doing that which in this world can never be reversed. And yet it is perhaps that relationship which is spoken of most frivolously, and entered into most carelessly and most wantonly. It is not a union merely between two creatures, it is a union between two spirits; and the intention of that bond is to perfect the nature of both, by supplementing their deficiencies with the force of contrast, giving to each sex those excellences in which it is naturally deficient; to the one strength of character and firmness of moral will; to the other sympathy, tenderness, meekness. And just so solemn, and just so glorious as these ends are for which the union was contemplated and intended, just so terrible are the consequences if it be prevented and abused; for there is no earthly relationship which has so much power to ennoble and to exalt.

THE WITHERED BRANCH.

A ROMANTIC STORY OF THE WELSH COAST.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CONCLUSION.

THE reverend gentleman, who found a ready listener in Bertram, treated him to a full description of the engagement that ensued between the *Falcon* and the *Rattlesnake*, in which the latter was victorious, and then Sir Morgan was called away to the death-bed of his wife.

In answer to Bertram's question as to who this terrible Captain Nicholas really was, Mr. Williams could only reply that nothing was definitely known of his true history. He had served under the flag of almost every maritime nation, and, though young, had seen service in every part of the globe. While carrying out the plans for a smuggling enterprise he had met Miss Walladmor, and had succeeded in winning her affections, though Sir Morgan, when he discovered what was going on, peremptorily forbade her to hold any communication whatever with the nameless adventurer; but the prohibition was of little avail, for though liable to capture at any moment, the smuggler and ex-conspirator still lingered in the neighbourhood, apparently as powerless to leave the dangerous attraction as the poor moth the light, which eventually destroys it.

At present all efforts to capture him on the part of the dragoons was vain, and it was with no little delight, as well as surprise, that Sir Charles Davenant heard that the redoubtable captain had voluntarily given himself up. He was at once placed in the strongest room in the castle, a jury was hastily summoned; he was tried, found guilty, and, in spite of an able defence, sentenced to be hanged. But he was not to die an ignominious death.

After the trial Gillie Godber had an interview with Sir Morgan, and convinced him by indisputable proofs that Captain Edward Nicholas and his own lost son were one and the same.

Thus then was Edward Walladmor restored to his father and the castle of his ancestors.

Sir Morgan was distracted, but could see no means of helping his unhappy son. Others outside the castle walls, however, including the crew of a ship he had once commanded, of which some mulattoes were members, were planning a rescue, while Miss Walladmor within had found a means of enabling the prisoner to escape as far as the picture gallery, and there met him for the last time.

They sat there for an hour hand locked in hand mingling their tears, their hopes, and the doubts of their youthful hearts, when suddenly the alarm bell of the castle rung out sharp and clear in the night air—loud discordant voices were heard, then a loud explosion, and the great door of the castle fell with a mighty crash. Hastily the lovers parted, and Edward moved swiftly forward to the scene of the fray. But Miss Walladmor could not rest alone, and followed him stealthily. She heard him speak, saw a dragoon pick him out and level his carbine at him; with a shriek she threw her arms around his neck, and received the fatal bullet in her own breast. Gently disengaging her, Edward laid her gently down on the carpeted floor and murmured words of tenderness and undying love. She opened her eyes only to meet a glare of torches and the black faces of the mulattoes that had come to rescue him. Shrinkingly she averted her gaze and turned to Edward who was bending over her, his features expressing the misery of love that feels its impotence to save.

Life was ebbing rapidly; a gleaming smile of tenderness rested upon her face; she half raised her hands and moved her lips; Edward Walladmor bent downwards to meet the action. She put her arms feebly about his neck; whispered something to him; and then, as he

kissed her lips in anguish, her arms parted from their languid grasp, and fell powerlessly on either side; she sighed deeply; her eyes closed; opened upon him once again; once again smiled her farewell love upon him; and, with that smile upon her face, rendered up her innocent spirit in the arms of him for whom she died.

All strife was hushed by this solemn scene. Sir Charles Davenant had now appeared, and called off the soldiers from a hopeless contest. The sailors gently released Miss Walladmor from the arms of her now insensible lover, and resigned her into the hands of her women.

Captain Walladmor they bore off to their boat.

Three hours before daylight they were on board their ship and under weigh for the south; and, as no pursuit was attempted or indeed possible, the vessel was first heard of again from the coast of South America.

Thus was the old rhyme fulfilled which Gillie Godber had so often chanted, and in a comprehensive sense that perhaps she had not hoped. "Grief was over at Walladmor." It was many months before Sir Morgan was able to bear the recital of all which had happened; and the news which had recently arrived of Captain Walladmor's death.

Large funds had been sent out to him in South America by Sir Morgan's friends: with these he had raised a horse regiment; and at the head of this in the decisive engagement of Manchinilla he had found at last "the death that he was wooing!" With a miniature of Miss Walladmor pressed to his lips, he was discovered lying on the ground of the last decisive charge; and Sir Morgan was satisfied to hear that his son had met the death of a soldier, and in a cause which he approved.

That Bertram was twin brother to Edward Nicholas the reader will long have suspected. By the letters of Captain Donneraile and the verbal communications of Bertram it appeared sufficiently that the wife of Captain Donneraile (at that time a mate on board the *Rattlesnake*) and Winifred Griffiths, being the only two women on board, had cast lots for the appropriation of the children. The happier lot had fallen upon Bertram: for, though it gave him up to the cruel spoiler that had pierced the hearts of his parents, yet had it thrown him upon a quiet life in a humble village of Germany where he was spared that spectacle of storm and guilt which had pursued the youthful steps of his unhappy twin brother. Prosperity had left to Winifred Griffiths for many years leisure for meditation upon the wrongs she had done to Sir Morgan. And when affliction visited her, it came in a shape that taught her to measure the strength of parental anguish: she lost her only child; and on her death-bed, being now left a widow, she had bequeathed to Bertram the whole sum of which she had robbed his father; upon which sum he had supported himself at the Saxon University of Halle. But the disclosure of his birth and connections, which she had deferred until her latter moments, had been cut short by death. What she said, however, had been sufficient to direct the course of Bertram to his native country. The discovery, which she had left imperfect, was now completed by others; and it shed comfort upon the declining days of Sir Morgan—that, from the amiable disposition and good sense of the son who was thus restored to him, when matured by more intercourse with the world, he could venture to hope for increase of honour and generations of happier days to the ancient house of Walladmor.

THE END.

BOYCOTTING THE DUMB CREATION.—"I say, Paddy, that is the worst looking horse that I have ever seen in harness. Why don't you fatten him up?" "Fat him up, is it? Faix, the poor baste can hardly carry the little mate that's on him now!" replied Paddy.

OUR GIRLS AND OTHER GIRLS.

Many people complain that our girls have too much liberty. There are, doubtless, some who abuse their privileges, and as these are usually girls whose manners render them conspicuous, they bring discredit upon the system which leaves them to flout and giggle unrestrained. We believe, however, that most of our young ladies are able to behave properly without constant supervision, and worthy of the freedom they enjoy. If some of them are left a little too much to their own devices, it is surely better to err in this direction than in the opposite one.

In Italy, for instance, a girl may never leave the house unless accompanied by her father; neither mother nor brother being considered a sufficient guard. She is permitted to read no books but fashion books, and is locked into her room at night. The one important occupation of her life is embroidery for her trousseau. This great work is begun at the age of seven, and many a young girl in her teens can show hundreds of under-garments adorned with elaborate needlework and laid carefully away in drawers, each dozen tied up with ribbon of a different colour.

Her school education tends towards the same object. A traveller in Italy recently stated that a graduate of a fashionable Italian convent-school asked him in good faith if it were really necessary to cross the sea to get to England. He adds, that his explanation of England being an island did not at all enlighten her, because she did not know that an island was surrounded by water.

Think of an intelligent girl condemned to such a life as this! Is not the liberty of our girls, which perhaps permits a few foolish individuals to display their giddiness somewhat offensively, far preferable to a system by which all are punished, and the best most severely? We believe in rational freedom.

WHAT HE MEANT.

Colonel Woods, the oldest practising lawyer in Iowa, and familiarly known as "Old Timber," was once called upon as expert to prove the reasonable value of certain services rendered by a brother attorney. On his direct examination he stated, in a rather careless manner, that he had been practising law in the Territory and State of Iowa for the last fifty or sixty years. Upon cross-examination, a young attorney undertook to have some sport at "Old Timber's" expense, with this result:

"How long did you say you had practised law in this country?"

"Fifty or sixty years, sir."

"Well, will you state what was the character of your practice during the earlier part—say, for the first twenty-five or thirty years in the Territory and State?"

"Yes, sir. I was then what might be appropriately called an itinerant lawyer."

"An itinerant lawyer! Will you be so kind, colonel, as to explain to the court and jury what you mean by the term 'itinerant lawyer'?"

"Certainly, sir. In those early days I used to travel around the circuit with the judge, and my business was to try cases for young gentlemen like you, who had brass enough to undertake a case, but not brains enough to try it!"

THE IRISH LAND LEAGUE is being imitated on a small scale in Northern Italy, where the labourers refuse to work unless they obtain better terms from the landlords. The poorer classes in the rural districts have long suffered bitterly from the petty oppressions of their superiors, and they now quote the example of the Irish, and declare that their wrongs are exactly similar, and deserve the same consideration. Every effort is being made to put down the agitation as quietly as possible, for fear of the movement spreading to other parts of the country. The districts round Parma and Brescia are most affected.

FACETIE.

TUNEFUL LYRE.—The Music teacher who broke his engagement.

A GREAT CURIOSITY.—A plate of butter from the cream of a joke.

THE man who sat down on a paper of tacks said they reminded him of the *Income-tax*.

"Do you write books?" said a lady to an accountant. "Yes, madam, I *right* them," he answered.

JOKING about her nose, a young lady said, "I had nothing to do with shaping it. It was a birthday present."

"FREE CHOPS" is a sign hung out by a Chicago restaurant, and when the customers apply they are shown to a wood-pile and handed an axe.

A BACHELOR cynic remarks that it is singular how early in life a child gains the reputation of resembling the richest and best-looking of his relatives.

"GOVERNESSES should never be required to do low menial work," said a gentleman. "Certainly not, but they frequently aspire to the hymeneal," replied a lady.

WHAT A MOTHER-IN-LAW SAID.—"Yes," said an affectionate mother; "the first year of my daughter's marriage I thought her husband was an angel; and I'm sure that every year since I've wished he was one."

"No, sir," exclaimed a politician—"no, sir; you'll never find me going back on an old friend, even if he has risen to wealth, influence, and distinction!"

A RECIPE for lemon pie, after stating the ingredients, adds: "Then sit on hot stove and stir constantly." How could one help stirring constantly while sitting on a hot stove?

WHEN a certain kind of man wants a job, he is ready to "accept a situation." The same kind of man, on being kicked out, "tenders his resignation." He likes to put it tenderly.

NO LONGER LONELY.—The young man who was "lonely since his mother died," is all right now. His father married a widow with five grown daughters, and they give a party every night.

A MAN whose house had been totally destroyed by fire, being about to write a letter of thanks to the fire company, a friend asked, "What are you going to thank them for?" "For saving my grounds," was the reply.

HER DECLINING YEARS.—The young woman who had many suitors, and who from the time she was sixteen until she was twenty-one rejected them all, referred in later life to that period as her "declining years."

THAT SETTLED THE ARGUMENT!—A famous artist once painted an angel with six toes. "Who ever saw an angel with six toes?" people inquired. "Whoever saw one with less?" was the counter-question.

A FAMOUS PUNSTER told a gentleman that whatever he said or did he would convert into a pun. The gentleman immediately presented his snuff-box, when the former replied, "Now sir, you have put me to a pinch indeed."

A GENTLEMAN from the South of England boasted that the papers in his village pay so much attention to society matters, "that a leading citizen cannot go home sober late at night without having the fact published as an interesting item."

THE beer-drinking sailor's motto—"I love to see a schooner coming over the bar." "On inquiry," says a correspondent, "we learned that a very large glass of beer is called a schooner, and then we are able to see the point of this joke."

TOUCHING, BUT AMBIGUOUS.—A blind mendicant who frequents the Rue St. Honoré, Paris, has the following announcement affixed to his bosom: "Blind! Father of four children, and husband of an invalid wife, the result of a terrible accident!"

"My son," said a shrewd old lady, "be careful how you marry a cashier's daughter, or you may have to visit your father-in-law in gaol."

A WITTY gentleman in speaking of a friend who was prostrated by illness, remarked that he could hardly recover, since his constitution was all gone. "If his constitution is all gone," said a bystander, "I do not see how he lives at all." "Oh," responded the wag, "he lives on the by-laws!"

"WHAT makes Colonel—— so popular? I'm sure he is very stupid. He can hardly see beyond his nose," said a lady to a friend, who replied: "My dear, sharp-sightedness is not what makes a person popular. It is what the colonel *doesn't* tell that gives him such popularity."

CONCLUSIVE.—Teacher: "John, what are your boots made of?" John: "Of leather." Teacher: "Where does the leather come from?" John: "From the hide of the ox." Teacher: "What animal therefore supplies you with boots, and gives you meat to eat?" John: "My father."

TWO MORE INNOCENTS.—"Here, James, take these two cakes, and give the smaller one to your little brother." James examines the cakes carefully, appears undecided, and finally takes a heroic bite out of one of them, which he passes over to his brother, with the remark "There, Tommy, I've made you a smaller one; they were both the same size!"

A LECTURER having been invited to deliver a lecture in a mountain town in Nevada, wrote to the committee of invitation: "I am informed that the roads leading up to your place are so steep and rocky that even a donkey couldn't climb them; therefore you must excuse me from making the attempt." He was unanimously excused.

"How many comets did you say there were?" inquired the magistrate of the prisoner, who had been locked up over-night for deranging the symmetry of a neighbour's features during an astronomical controversy. "Three, as it please yer honour." The court smiled incredulously, upon observing which Pat added, "I'm after telling you the truth. Mickey Farrell, he saw one; Mrs. Dinis, she saw another; and it was meself that saw the third."

THE CHALLENGE!—At a public-meeting held in Dundee a poor-law official was descending on the misrepresentations to which his opponents had subjected him. "They have," he said, "called me everything but a gentleman, everything that is bad—nay, they have compared me to Satan himself. Now," he proceeded, coming forward to the front of the platform, and exhibiting a well-shaped foot, "I ask you if you see any cloven hoof there?" "Tak' aff yer shae!" (shoe) shouted a voice from the gallery.

WANTS NURSING.—A leading newspaper recently contained this advertisement: "Girl, 17, wants nursing." It is strange that a girl of that age should be under the necessity of informing the public that she needs nursing; and still stranger that such proclamation should be required in London, which is known to be the abode of so many gallant young men, who are always ready to take in hand and soothe and amuse with the most attentive nursing any attractive girl between 17 and 25. It is very likely that a girl of 17 will not long want nursing if she has the courage to speak out.

HE OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN A SPARTAN.—The blind devotion with which the late John Forster's servant Henry did his service was illustrated on one occasion when his master had a dinner-party. During the dinner Henry was nervous, and made two or three blunders. His master chafed and fumed, and cast angry glances at his servant; but the poor man could not settle quietly to his duty. At last, when the desert had been placed upon the table, he stole timidly behind Mr. Forster's chair, and said, "Please, sir, can you spare me now? My house has been on fire for the last hour and a half."

SOCIETY.

HER MAJESTY often receives as many as forty telegrams a day, all of which she takes note of. The Queen, who ordinarily leads a very busy life, is busier than ever, and when she returns from her long drives, usually sits up reading despatches and writing till one in the morning, resuming again at eight a.m. her routine of day's duties.

The Archbishop of Canterbury and Miss Tait gave their first garden party this season at Lambeth Palace on Wednesday week, from four to seven p.m. There was a very large attendance of all ranks of society. Two heavy showers fell during the afternoon, but the whole of the state rooms at Lambeth were thrown open, and provided ample accommodation for the company (over 1,200 persons) during the showers.

At the grand fete and fancy dress ball just given at the Orleans Club, his Royal Highness the Duke of Madrid and suite were to be present. The young Indian princes were also expected.

The Marchioness of Salisbury's last ball at her residence in Arlington-street was a very brilliant affair. The entrance-hall and corridor leading to the principal drawing-rooms were prettily arranged with a profusion of flowers. The Prince and Princess of Wales came in just after midnight. The Princess Mary Adelaide (Duchess of Teck), attended by the Hon. Mary Thesiger, had previously arrived. The noble host received the Royal guests as they alighted at the main entrance. The Princess of Wales wore a white costume with a profusion of diamonds in the hair and on the dress. A beautiful dress of terra-cotta tulle had bouquets of lily of the valley, with silver leaves, bodice, and paniers of terra-cotta and silver brocade; very beautiful diamonds were worn in the hair and round the top of the bodice.

The young Earl of Shrewsbury and his Countess have arrived at their seat, Alton Towers where they are to stay for a few months. They were everywhere received with acclamation by the tenantry; festoons and triumphal arches being erected at convenient spots on the route to the house.

The Earl of March, Darnley and Kinrara, M.P. for West Sussex (eldest son of the Duke of Richmond and Gordon), was married on the 3rd inst. to Miss Isabel Sophie Craven, second daughter of Mr. William George Craven (formerly of the 1st Life-Guards), and great granddaughter of the first Earl of Craven, by special licence, at the Chapel Royal, Savoy, in the presence of a most distinguished assembly. The service was full choral. The bride was dressed in white satin with a long square train and trimmed with tulle, ostrich feathers, and orange blossoms; and a wreath of the same flowers was covered by a tulle veil. Her ornaments were a pearl necklace with diamond and pearl pendant, and diamond and pearl bracelet, the gift of the bridegroom. The bridesmaids were resplendent in white silk and muslin, with dark ruby toques and feathers. Each wore a gold bracelet with the initials "I.M." and coronet in blue enamel, the gift of the bridegroom. The toilettes worn by the ladies of the wedding party were very handsome. Among them may be mentioned that of Princess Mary Adelaide, Duchess of Teck, who was attired in black satin and lace, relieved with pale blue, and black bonnet with small blue feather. The Duchess of Richmond's dress was of prune satin merveilleux, trimmed with bead passementerie of the same colour, with bonnet to match, and black mantle trimmed with gold gimp. The Duchess of Abercorn wore chestnut moiré, with bonnet to match. The Countess of Wilton wore a very handsome dress of the loveliest pale grey, the bodice and box-plaited skirt were of moiré, and the paniers and drapery of sicilienne; her bonnet matched, and she wore diamond ornaments. It may be remembered that his lordship was previously married and has been left some little time a widower.

STATISTICS.

A YEAR'S IMMIGRATION IN A MONTH.—On the last day of May eight steamers landed at Castle Garden, 5,995 immigrants, the largest number ever received in one day. Among them were sixty silk weavers from Marseilles, and over a hundred millers from Hamburg. The total arrivals for May, 90,019, outnumbered those of the entire year of 1876 or of 1878.

FIVE MONTHS' EVICTIONS IN IRELAND.—A Parliamentary return issued on Wednesday shows that during the five months ended March last, 1,048 tenants were evicted in Ireland who have not since been re-admitted as tenants. Of these 365 took place in Ulster, 182 in Leinster, 287 in Connaught, and 214 in Munster. The greatest number of evictions took place in March last, the numbers increasing from 132 in November, 139 in December, 188 in January, 267 in February, to 322 in March. The return does not include sub-tenants.

THE IRISH CONSTABULARY.—The normal effective strength of the Royal Irish Constabulary is about 11,500 men, no fewer than 4,821 officers and constables are pensioned from the force. There are thus about three pensioners to every seven constables on active duty. The charge upon the Exchequer for the superannuation allowances of these 4,821 pensioners for 1881-82 is estimated at £224,769, being nearly a fifth of the whole expenditure on the force.

GEMS.

KNOWLEDGE.—All exact knowledge depends upon exact measurement.

TRUTH.—Never be afraid to own the truth, let the consequences be what they may. Ever keep truth for your motto and guide, and you will surely be the gainer in the end.

NOISE is the music of industry.

THE greatest factor of eloquence is sincerity. **DIFFICULTY** enlists the strong, but it is then the weak desert.

WOUNDS of the heart are the only ones that are healed by opening.

THE character that needs law to mend it is hardly worth the tinkering.

LOVE nothing too violently; hate nothing too passionately; fear nothing too strongly.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

STRAWBERRY JAM.—Take very fine scarlet strawberries, gathered in dry weather when quite ripe, and put to them a little juice of red currants. Beat and sift three-quarters of a pound of sugar to each pound of fruit, strew it over the strawberries, and put into a preserving pan. Set over a clear slow fire, skim, then boil twenty minutes, and put into pots.

TO BROIL MACKEREL.—Cut them open, remove the head, take the backbone out. Dry the inside with a clean cloth, sprinkle it with flour, pepper, and salt. Grill the inside of the mackerel first. After turning it, while the back is exposed to the fire lay on the upper surface a few lumps of butter. As soon as done serve quickly. A little lemon juice squeezed over it is a great improvement.

VEAL PIE.—Take some of the neck, cut up in small pieces, season with pepper and salt, and put in a few pieces of ham off the cushion, also some hard boiled eggs cut in pieces, and (if liked) forcemeat balls. Cover with a good crust, and bake. When done pour in some good gravy.

MINT SAUCE.—Chop as finely as possible a quantity of mint leaves, previously washed. Add to them sufficient white wine vinegar and water in equal parts to float them, and a small quantity of powdered sugar. Let the sauce stand for an hour before serving.

ROAST LEG OF LAMB.—Let the fire be moderate, and roast the joint slowly, basting it frequently till done, when it should be sprinkled with salt, and the gravy freed from all fat before serving. Serve with mint sauce.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE NEW CITY.—A royal charter, constituting the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne a city, was received by the town clerk on Wednesday morning, and was accepted by the Corporation at its monthly meeting in the afternoon. Arrangements are being made for the consecration of the Bishop of Newcastle in Durham Cathedral on the 25th inst.

DUST AND DUSTING.—Do not dust, but wipe! The duster, that peaceful emblem of domestic labour may, under certain circumstances, become a dangerous weapon to handle. We are in earnest. An eminent scientist declares it to be a fact. Do you know what you are doing when you brush away dust? You disseminate in the air, and consequently introduce into your own interior, into your tissues and respiratory organs, all sorts of eggs, spores, epidemic germs and murderous vibrations which dust contains. One movement with a feather duster may be enough to poison both you and your neighbours—to inoculate you all with typhus, varioloid, or cholera—strange as it may appear. Instead of a feather duster take a damp cloth; wipe away the dust instead of stirring it up. In short, wipe—never dust.

ETIQUETTE IN WRITING.—With regard to writing letters, none but schoolgirls cross and recross a sheet of writing-paper; two sheets of paper are invariably used if one sheet of paper will not contain all that is to be said. If half the second sheet of paper is left blank, it is not torn off, a whole sheet being more convenient to hold and to fold than is a half sheet of paper. If a few last words are necessary to complete a letter, they are written on the margin, not on the writing across the face of the pages. In addressing envelopes the address should be written legibly in the centre of the envelope, and not run off into a corner, leaving a third of the envelope blank. Many people write their initials or name in full in one corner of the envelope; this is quite a matter of inclination.

BIBLE ERRORS.—Here is a bit of information that will do for the conventional scrap-book which is the property of every well regulated household. Many editions of the Bible have been published during the last three hundred years, and into not a few of them some peculiar errors have crept. What is known as the "Breeches Bible" (Geneva, 1560) was so called because Genesis iii., 7, was translated: "They sewed fig leaves together and made themselves breeches," instead of "aprons," as in the English version now used. In the "Treacle Bible," (1568) Jeremiah vii., 22, was made to read: "Is there no treacle in Gilead," &c., instead of "balm;" and in 1609 the word was changed to "rosin;" "balm" was first used in 1711. The "Vinegar Bible," printed in Oxford in 1717, by John Basket, derived its name from its heading of Luke xx., which was made to read: "The parable of the vinegar." The book had many other errors, from which it has also been called, after the printer's name, "A basket of errors."

LADIES' DRESS IN JULY.—Soft clinging materials are in vogue. The general outline of a well-made dress is—to be cut high on the shoulders, with demi-long sleeves, very long and slim-waisted, paniers on the hips (arranged high or low, according to the size of the wearer's hips), a short narrow skirt, thickly ruched at the edge, much ornamented in front, and well puffed at the back below the waist. And in this pouf lies the difficulty. Crinolettes are usually worn in England for the support of the pouf, which fashion demands must stand well out below a pronounced curve of the waist, and crinolettes are given to wobble when the wearer walks. The more skilful French dressmaker makes the pouf by draping the dress amply, and supporting it by cleverly bent whalebones, and occasionally by the aid of a small horse-hair cushion, so sewn inside the skirt that it forms a part of it—a vastly superior contrivance to the crinolette.—From "What to Wear," in *Cassell's Magazine* for July

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. P. (Exeter).—The letter with its enclosure reached us in due course.

W. R. B.—We observe your hesitation. To help you to decide is beyond our province.

S. H.—Probably you mistake; for the evidence of good faith should first proceed from you.

WM. P.—We have repeatedly said that we cannot undertake to answer correspondents through the post-office.

FRED R.—If the description had not been too indefinite, the tenor of the communication would have been objectionable.

ALICE.—The 19th March, 1882, was on Wednesday.

T. R. F.—A woman cannot legally marry again until her first husband is proved dead, or she has been divorced from him.

SIS JESUVA.—A gentleman should wait until the lady acknowledges him before bowing to her in the street—especially in the case of so slight an acquaintance.

MINNIE.—1. The name of Jane is the feminine of John, meaning "beloved of the Lord." Frederick means "Rich peace." Amabel "loveable." 2. Writing legible, but not too careful.

DAISY.—If you cannot make up your mind as to which of the two young men you love best you cannot be very deeply in love with either. Wait a little while before giving a decided answer.

M. D.—The salary of the Lord Chancellor is £10,000 a year.

JOSEPH B.—A will does not need a stamp, but it must be properly attested.

MAURA.—In the language of flowers the scarlet geranium means passion; the white rose pure affection.

A. L. D.—The property being personal would go to the children in equal shares.

JESSIE J.—1. Unpleasant breath may be improved by chewing occasionally a little charcoal, or if you prefer it in the powdered state, by taking a small teaspoonful of it in a third of a glass of water two or three times a week. 2. If your complexion is not naturally fair all the cosmetics in the world will fail to make it so; but it may be improved by daily ablutions in tepid water, by regular habits and outdoor exercise, and by attention to the health generally. 3. Lemon juice and glycerine will remove tan or sunburn, and help to soften and whiten the skin.

MARBY F.—The line "Procrastination is the thief of time," occurs in "Young's Night Thoughts."

D. J. B.—The embroidered gloves presented to judges at Maiden Assizes were introduced into England in 1880.

SAM.—Millbank Penitentiary is a modification of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon.

B. I. R.—Microscopes were invented by Jansen in Holland in 1609.

S. T. P.—Middlesbrough has rapidly risen to its present proportions; the first house was erected by George Chapman in April, 1830.

ALBERT F.—What is the use of groaning and grieving over the inevitable? Forget all about the girl who has so cruelly jilted you and stick closely to hard work.

MARY JANE T.—Dipping the hands in club moss, obtainable at any herb-shop, will check undue perspiration and enable you to do the finest work without soiling it.

DORA R.—Irish moss, or carrageen, is a marine plant which grows upon rocks on the coast of Europe, and is largely collected on the coast of Ireland. It is also found in abundance on the southern sea-coast of Massachusetts. It is prepared for market by simply spreading it out to dry on the beach. It is valuable as a light and nutritious food for individuals, and is particularly recommended in pulmonary and scrofulous affections, dysentery, diarrhoea, &c. It is prepared by macerating it in cold water, in which it swells without dissolving, and which removes the taste of extraneous matters mixed with it. It is then boiled in water, of which three pints are used to the ounce of moss. Milk instead of water makes a more nutritious preparation. It dissolves and gelatinizes, and the jelly is flavoured with lemon juice, and sweetened with sugar. It can be bought of any druggist.

LEICESTER J.—Monaco is an Italian principality which has been held by the family of the Grimaldi for nine hundred years.

BARTON.—A good style of singing can only be obtained by constant practice of the proper exercises for the production of the voice.

AMOR.—The quotation "The quarrels of lovers are the renewal of love," is from the Latin poet Terence. Butler has reproduced the idea in a slightly different form in his Hudibras.

LITTLE INNOCEENCE.—Meerschaum (German for sea foam, so called from its lightness and whitish appearance) is a hydrous silicate of magnesia. It is of a soft, earthy texture, somewhat resembling chalk, and is found in various parts of southern Europe, in veins of serpentine and in tertiary deposits. It is easily cut, and when first removed from the bed of a cheese-like consistency. It is also found in Asia Minor, in alluvium, apparently the result of the decomposition of carbonate of magnesia belonging to neighbouring serpentine rocks. For exportation it is roughly shaped into blocks or rude forms of pipes. The artificial meerschaum, of which the cheaper pipes are manufactured, is made of the chips or parings of the natural mineral, which are reduced to fine powder, boiled in water, moulded and dried, sometimes pipe-clay being added to the mixture.

N. D.—The famous picture of "The Last Supper" was painted by Leonardo da Vinci.

POLLY D.—A "morganatic" marriage is where the left hand is given instead of the right between a man of superior and a woman of inferior rank, in which it is stipulated that the children of the latter shall not enjoy the rank or inherit the possessions of the former, but the children are legitimate. These marriages are frequently made by royalty and by the highest nobility in Germany.

BESSIE.—1. Call or leave your card within a week after the party. 2. Handwriting fair.

J. T. R.—No stamp is required.

L. M. V.—Write to the secretary of the General Post Office, St. Martin's-le-Grand.

EFFIE.—The best application for a burn is the mixture of olive oil and lime water, known as carron oil.

TOM TUG.—If you wish to sacrifice the best years of your life, you cannot do it more effectually than by running away and going to sea. Concerning your ambition to become the captain of a vessel, it would be many years before you reached it after a long service, and then only if you were competent and could pass the necessary examinations.

MILTON D.—Oranges were first brought from China by the Portuguese in the 16th century, cherries by the Romans, and strawberries from Flanders about 1530.

BIG DRUM.—The Royal English Fusiliers (7th Regiment) was raised in 1685, the 21st or North British in 1679, and the Royal Welch (23rd) in 1688.

ANTHONY.—"The South Sea Bubble" occurred in 1720.

LILLIE J.—The South Kensington Museum was opened 24th June, 1857.

THOU ART AWAY.

Thou art away—the evening shades are falling,
The stars steal out and shed their light on me,
The sweet-voiced nightingale's mate is calling,
And all around is sweet serenity.
But I am sad—I miss thee—oh, I miss thee!
I do not feel thy soft hand on my brow—
I cannot hear thy voice—I cannot kiss thee—
How sweet were life if thou wert with me now.

Thou art away, and midnight comes to greet me—
The moon her soft light throws upon my path,
And fancy whisp'ring sweet things, tries to cheat me
Out of the sadness which my sick soul hath.
But, oh, she cannot lure me into smiling,
Nor to my bosom lend one throb of cheer,
With all her fond and innocent beguiling,
For, oh, my love, my love, thou art not here.

Thou art away, and morn again is breaking—
The air is vocal with the wild bird's song—
Red glows the east—all nature is awaking,
The babbling brook runs merrily along.
And still I miss thee, loved one, from my dwelling—
Morn, noon, and night appear and disappear,
And still my heart with sad unrest is swelling,
Because, my heart—my life, thou art not here.

D. H. J.

FRED.—In boating parties, one gentleman should always stay in the boat and do his best to steady it while the others help the ladies to step in it from the bank or landing.

IONORAMUS.—Spithead is named from the sandbank named the Spit between Port-mouth and the Isle of Wight.

LAURA.—Spelling Books were introduced from the United States into London in the autumn of 1875, but their use was soon run; though immensely popular at first, they soon declined in favour, and one scarcely hears of them at all now.

M. J. F.—Two pretty young ladies neatly dressed, and one apparently with beautiful hair.

KINLOCH.—The Scotch, Irish, Welsh, and Breton languages are all varieties of the Celtic.

PORTER.—Cricket is a very ancient game, said to greatly resemble the "club ball" of the fourteenth century.

SIMEON.—Extravagantly high heels are decidedly injurious.

J. R. S.—Act simply and straightforwardly in the matter. Under the circumstances it would be best to write.

L. D. J.—"Convent Garden" is a corruption of Convent Garden, it having formed the Garden of St. Peter's Convent. The piazza and church were designed by Inigo Jones.

PRESTON PARK.—1. The term "Infantry" is said to be derived from an event in Spanish history. An infant of Spain, having assembled a body of troops and marched to the aid of his father, assisted him in defeating the Moors. The foot soldiers thus gained honour and became distinguished by the name of their leader, and that class of soldiers were afterwards termed Infantry. 2. The following composition will colour a gun barrel a very pleasing dead grey, the shade of which is deepened by the number of times the operation is repeated:—Dissolve two parts of crystallized chloride of iron, two parts of solid chloride of antimony, and one part of gallic acid, in four or five parts of water. With this moisten a piece of sponge or cloth, and apply to the gun-barrel, or any object of iron or steel which it is desired to colour. Let it dry in the air, and repeat the operation several times; then wash with water; dry, and rub with boiled linseed-oil.

JOAN.—Follow your friend's suggestion and you will be better and happier for it. Do not encourage moodiness or indecision. Try to be loving, natural, and joyous, and to brighten your home in every possible way.

LOUIS.—To renovate craps, brush the craps thoroughly with a soft brush, and pin it over an ironing sheet. Then cover it entirely with a piece of wet cloth—dark muslin is the best—and lay a dry cloth over and press it lightly with a hot flat-iron. Leave it for an hour or two to become perfectly dry, after removing the damped cloths. Craps veils which have been exposed to rain, or have lost their stiffness in the damp air, may be pressed by carefully folding them, then placing them between two mattresses which are to be slept upon.

CHRISTINE.—1. We do not think it wise for a young couple whose ages are only eighteen and fifteen to enter into a formal marriage engagement, as they might, after a more extended acquaintance with society, regret that they had acted with such precipitancy, especially as the claims of business will separate you for some time. We would advise that you ask the privilege of corresponding with the young lady, which permission, if she really likes you, she will not deny. Thus your intimacy may be continued, and yet liberty be reserved to each for forming a wise judgment. Absence is the best of tests for the reality of love, and if you find your attachment mutually strengthened, instead of weakened, after a separation of a year or two, you will then be fully justified in an avowal of your true sentiments. As you possess the means to support a wife, you need not delay marrying much beyond your majority.

SUPER.—The significations attached to the precious stones are as follows:—Garnet, constancy; amethyst, sincerity; bloodstone, courage; diamond, innocence; emerald, success in life; agate, health and long life; cornelian, content; sardonyx, wedded happiness; chrysolite, antidote to madness; opal, honest topos; fidelity; turquoise, prosperity; pearl, purity. Regard rings are those having a setting composed of the six stones—ruby, emerald, garnet, amethyst, ruby and diamond. 2. The gems have been arranged into a gem alphabet, which runs—amethyst, beryl, chrysoberyl, diamond, emerald, feldspar, garnet, hyacinth, jasper, kyanite, lapis-lazuli, malachite, natrolite, opal, porphyry, quartz-agate, ruby, sapphire, topaz, uvarovite, zircon, antique wood-opal, xanthite, zircon. 3. Your penmanship is neat, but the form of the letters may be improved by practice, with the use of good copies.

LOREDAN.—The Arctic exploring steamer Jeannette sailed from San Francisco, July 8, 1879, under the command of Lieutenant George W. De Long, with Lieutenant C. W. Chipp, chief officer, and Lieutenant J. W. Danenhower, second officer, all of the United States Navy. The crew consisted of thirty-one men all told. The programme embraced a voyage of polar exploration by way of Bebring's Straits, but the vessel was lost.

OMEGA.—1. The horns of various animals are employed for useful and ornamental purposes. Many of these are naturally transparent of fine quality and colour, while others are, strictly speaking, not horn, but bone. The horns peculiarly adapted for being converted into useful shapes are those of the ox, antelope, goat, and sheep. These contain just enough gelatine to admit of their being softened by the application of less heat than is required for melting lead. The material may then be cut with knives or shears, flattened into plates, divided into leaves, and struck between dies like metal.

MARTHA.—Seek the employment for which you are best fitted. Those succeed best who follow out, earnestly and independently, what is to their taste.—Not to accept invitations to the receptions is to thrust yourself into the background, and give the gentlemen good reason for "passing you by" in their attentions, on other occasions.

ERINNE.—"Hibernian," as applied to a native of Ireland, is not "slang" at all. Hibernia was the Latin name of Ireland, by which it is still called, occasionally, in poetry. And the term Hibernian—meaning, as an adjective, pertaining to the Irish or Ireland, and as a noun, a native of Ireland—is derived from the Latin Hibernia. A "Hibernianism" is an idiom or mode of speech peculiar to the Irish. In the same way we speak of a Spanish idiom as a "Hispanicism," because Spain was called Hispania by the Latins.

LISA.—"In reading recently a novel I came to a reference to the Sibylline Books. Can you tell me what they were?" The legend is that one of the Sibyls, who were supposed to write from direct inspiration, came to Tarquin the Second, offering nine volumes for sale at an extortionate price. Upon his refusal to buy them, she burned three, and again offered the remaining six; again refused, she burned three more, when the monarch bought the last three, and the Sibyl disappeared. These books were called the Sibylline Books, or Sibylline verses, and were supposed to be prophetic, and carefully guarded and consulted upon all state occasions. Being destroyed by fire, another collection of the inspired writings was made by sending to all parts of Greece. A fuller account than our space allows will be found in any classical dictionary.

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†† We cannot undertake to return rejected Manuscripts.

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